

THE Hongkong Weekly Press

AND China Overland Trade Report.

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BIRTH.

On March 3rd, at the Government Civil Hospital, the wife of EDWARD JONES, of a daughter.

MARRIAGE.

On March 5th, at Canton Christian College, Canton, by the Rev. O. F. Wisner, D.D., CARL CLYDE RIDDLEGE, of Hongkong, to ANNA KETURAH EDMUNDS, daughter of Mr. James R. Edmunds, of Baltimore, U.S.A.

DEATHS.

On February 27th, at Shanghai, P. L. SWENKEN, late of H.B.M.'s Post Office, Shanghai, aged 23 years.

On February 27th, at Shanghai, BRENNAN ATKINSON, aged 41 years.

On March 4th, JOSEPH MITCHELL, Lighthouse keeper of Green Island Lighthouse.

Hongkong Weekly Press.

HONGKONG OFFICE: 10A, DES VOGES ROAD, C.

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ARRIVAL OF MAILS.

The English Mail of February 8th arrived, per the ss. *Malta*, on Friday, the 8th instant.

FAR EASTERN NEWS.

As interesting Chinese marriage will take place in the beginning of next moon when the only son of His Excellency Wu Ting Fang weds the eldest daughter of the Hon. Dr. Ho Kai.

Captain C. V. Lloyd, who for many years commanded the river steamer *Hankow* which was destroyed by fire during his absence at Home on leave, has been given the command of the *Fatshan*.

Tls. 6,000,000, according to a northern contemporary, have been spent within the last two years on munitions of war for the Peiyang army, and of this sum Tls. 2,000,000 have been spent in Japan and Tls. 1,000,000 in Germany, while the balance has been divided between Great Britain, France, Belgium and Austria-Hungary.

At a meeting of the committee of St. Andrew's Society accounts of the St. Andrew's Ball and Burns' concert were submitted. The ball showed a clear profit of \$700 while \$102 was the amount realised on the concert after covering expenses. Both these amounts, by the unanimous decision of those in attendance, are to be transferred to the charity fund.

The average minimum of the thermometer in Shanghai in February, 1907, was 33.63, the average maximum 41.46, and the mean 37.54 against 34.77, 45.92 and 40.34 respectively in February, 1906. The rainfall in February amounted to 2.37 inches (exclusive of about 2.5 inches of snow on the 15th) and rain or snow fell on eleven days. In February, 1906 rain or snow fell on sixteen days.

A Chinese Imperial Decree dated February 25th says:—We have received a memorial from Chou Fu, Viceroy of the two Kwang provinces, reporting the illness of Liu Yung-fu, Major-General commanding the Military Circuit of Shihchi province of Kwangtung, and asking that he be permitted to resign his post. The request is granted and Pan Shu-yu is appointed Major-General of the above named Circuit.

A Hsian (capital of Shen-i province) dispatch states that H. K. Shen Yun, Viceroy of the Shan-Kan provinces, has given permission to a Belgian engineer tentatively to develop a place near the city of Lanchou, the capital of Kansu, where the engineer has declared to the Viceroy there are indications of the precious metal in sufficient quantities to make the enterprise a paying concern. A later dispatch on the same subject gives the further information that, assisted by a number of men engaged from Lanchou, the Belgian engineer in question has had his labours abundantly rewarded.

The famine-stricken population of Taoyuan-hsien, west of Tsingkiangpu on the mouth of the Huangse Lake and the Grand Canal, has plundered the rice boats of the Government. The whole district from here to Huchowfu is full of pillaging bands. General Yin Chang has received orders to proceed without any consideration against the rioters and to have every one decapitated on the spot who is found plundering the rice stores. The situation in the famine districts is assuming a rather dangerous character. The troops have been augmented but are far from sufficient to restore order and peace.

Messrs. Helm Bros., No. 43, Yamashita-cho Yokohama, filed a petition with the Superintendent of the Yokohama Customs against the application of the provisions under No. 390 of the Import Tariff on telephone wire imported by that firm on February 12th, the petitioners contending that 5 per cent ad valorem duty should properly be imposed according to the Japan-German Conventional Tariff, instead of 20 per cent duty under the first named tariff. The petition was, however, rejected on the curious ground that the provisions under No. 13 of the Conventional Tariff were applicable exclusively to telegraph wire, and not to telephone wire.

The licensee of the Western Hotel appeared before Mr. F. A. Hazeland at the Magistracy on Feb. 26th on a charge of selling liquor after hours. Mr. Roberts pointed out that he was not aware he had been doing wrong as there was no time specified in the certificate and his Worship, taking this into consideration, ordered the summons to be withdrawn and the point to be brought under the notice of the Captain Superintendent of Police.

The *N. C. Daily News* says:—We are glad to learn that steps are being taken to arrange for the holding of an International Exhibition of Foreign Manufactures in Shanghai. The matter, it is understood, is in the hands of the China Association and it is proposed to secure the co-operation of the Shanghai General Chamber of Commerce, and of the American, German and Japanese Associations. On the receipt of favourable replies from these bodies, there will be no delay in learning the measure of support likely to be secured from manufacturers in the United Kingdom and the British Colonies, in Europe, America and Japan. It should be possible to hold the Exhibition towards the end of 1908.

We elsewhere announce the death at Shanghai on February 27th of Mr. Brennan Atkinson. Mr. Atkinson, who had been ill for some time, was forty-one years of age. His father Mr. John Atkinson had charge of the Loongwha Powder Mills some thirty years ago. The deceased gentleman started his career as an architect and civil engineer about twenty years ago, when he joined Mr. Thomas Kingmill. In 1894 he started business on his own account, being joined four years later by Mr. Arthur Dallas. Messrs. Atkinson and Dallas soon became one of the best known firms of architects in the Far East. Mr. Atkinson leaves a widow and several children, with whom deep sympathy will be felt by his large circle of friends. He was a prominent Mason.

WRECK OF THE SS. “DAKOTA.”

A *Daily Press* telegram dated Tokyo, March 5th, said:

The ss. *Dakota* is now regarded as a total loss. The crew and the mails have been landed.

The captain of a Japanese steamer following the *Dakota* says that at the time she struck that afternoon the weather was fine, and he was much surprised by the course taken by the liner. He was watching her when she struck the reef, and saw her plunge over until her bow was submerged and her stern high in the air. It is admitted that that part of the coast is dangerous to shipping. It has been the scene of two previous disasters.

The *Dakota's* passengers have arrived at Yokohama.

Tokyo, March 6th.

The latest position of the ss. *Dakota* is unchanged. In the event of bad weather, her break-up is considered certain. The salvage vessel is expected to arrive to-morrow.

Tokyo, March 7th.

The Nippon Yusen Kaisha experts have examined the *Dakota* and found a hole in her bottom which they consider makes it impossible to refloat her. The captain is of the opposite opinion.

"REMEMBER THE MAINE"— ALSO THE MIKASA.

(Daily Press, 4th March.)

Nearly two years ago the world was astonished by the explosion and sinking of the Japanese battleship *Mikasa*. The great war had been finished, and peace declared; and the ship, which as Admiral Togo's flagship, had borne all the burden of the fight, had returned for refitment to Saseho. The Admiral had gone up to Tokyo to pay his respects to his EMPEROR, and the greater part of the crew had either been discharged or were on shore on leave, when, without a moment's warning, the big ship, the finest and newest of the entire Japanese navy, which had only arrived from England to take her part in the outbreak of the war, burst into flames; and the flames mysteriously communicating with the magazine, the entire ship blew up, and instantaneously disappeared beneath the water. Most of those on board, consisting of a portion of her crew, and of some who had been hastily summoned from the other ships in harbour to assist in extinguishing the flames, were either blown to pieces in the explosion, or carried down with the ship, so that no direct evidence was available as to what had really occurred on board. The nation at large had been dissatisfied with the terms of the peace arrived at by the Government, and this dissatisfaction had in Tokyo broken out into mob riots, and there were not wanting those who attributed the explosion to the wilful act of some discontents on board the ship herself, who thus sought to take revenge for a supposed slight on the victorious navy which had so recently covered itself with glory at the battle of Tsushima.

Under the circumstances it was clearly to the advantage of Japan to court the fullest enquiry into the circumstances, and to afford the fullest information in its power as to what actually happened. During the war the world had seen with unmix'd admiration the unanimity of purpose which had actuated the entire nation; and had enabled it to throw an impenetrable veil of secrecy over all the movements of the army and navy at home or at the actual seat of war equally. This capacity for concealment, fully understood, as it was, by every individual in the empire, was a valuable help in the conduct of the war, and was undoubtedly one of the chief causes of success in the last great battles about Mukden; but its necessity had passed, and, to put Japan at rights with the world at large, it would have been more consonant with the interests of the nation in the case of the explosion to have courted the fullest investigation. This, unfortunately for the honour of Japan, was not done, but every attempt, as in the other case of operations in the field, was made to throw a veil of mystery over the entire affair. We at the time in commenting on the catastrophe pointed out its inadvisability, and showed how the silence was giving the enemies of Japan a handle which they would certainly make the most of. The result was, as we at the time foresaw, the story of a mutiny on board came to be generally credited, and Japan and the Japanese navy were lowered considerably in the estimation of the world. At the time too we suggested that the real cause of the explosion was spontaneous. The British Government had been largely experimenting with explosives; it had found that in these high explosives there was always a tendency towards instability, and that in these picric acid compounds the higher the explosive the greater became

the tendency to instability of the compound. Under the circumstances the British authorities had arrived at a compromise, and accepted a compound which although not giving the missiles the greatest velocity practicable, was yet under all conditions of service the safest. Not content with these results the Japanese, conceiving they had discovered a method of reducing the risk of explosion, introduced into its service a higher class of explosive. It was possibly correct in its conclusions: its higher explosive did undeniably tend towards the successful issue of the war, and as long as the war lasted no evil results occurred, so far as any outside knowledge at least, goes. The large stock on board the *Mikasa* was possibly involuntarily left on board; and it was the spontaneous combustion of this that we suggested was the cause of the explosion.

Experts hesitated to give a final opinion pending the raising and thorough examination of the interior of the ship, but the damage proved so much more intense than was at first estimated that it was only the other day that the big ship was refloated. A complete examination, though of course a judgment cannot under the circumstances be considered infallible, goes to show that the theory of spontaneous combustion is most consonant with the conditions; and it may be now considered that the heavy weight of suspicion that for a time hung on the honour of the Japanese navy may be looked upon as once for all dissipated. This is doubtless satisfactory to Japan as a nation, and more especially to Admiral Togo as a commander; and we may congratulate him on the removal of this last slur on his reputation. But the incident seems possibly to throw light on another historic explosion, the effects of which have since seriously affected the balance of power throughout the world. Under not altogether dissimilar conditions the American warship *Maine* blew up when quietly at anchor in the harbour of Havana. The cause was equally mysterious, but so much was not then known of the ordinary behaviour of these high explosives. The evidence—what little there was—seemed to point to treachery somewhere, and it was a moot point whether it occurred amongst the crew of the warship, or was a deliberate outrage on the part of someone connected, or in sympathy, with the Spanish Government whose relations with the United States were considerably strained. Public feeling ran high on both sides, and so far did it go in the States themselves, that, however reluctantly, the Government at Washington was compelled to declare war. The consequence was, of course, the loss of Spain's colonial possessions, and the establishment in the Pacific of the United States as a colonial Power. Now that the verdict has been given in the case of the *Mikasa* of accidental explosion, public opinion has gone back to the similar explosion on board the *Maine*. Was it not possible that the aspersions cast on both sides in the heat of argument were both equally unfounded? That past is gone beyond recall, but it would tend to a removal of many sorenesses, could the unfortunate explosion be shown to have arisen from circumstances beyond the control of either.

It is notified in the *Gazette* that Frederick Ogden Amy, third class inspector in the Sanitary Department, has been suspended from the exercise of his office for corrupt practices, with effect from the 25th ult., pending the decision of the Secretary of State for the Colonies regarding his dismissal from the Government service.

IDEOGRAMS AND IMPERIAL COHERENCE.

(Daily Press, 5th March.)

The manner in which President ROOSEVELT's fanciful attempt to introduce improved spelling into the English language has been received affords an interesting illustration of the power of an established written character—in China, for example. An alphabetical form of writing is not in reality purely phonetic. After it has been in use for any long period it becomes to a large extent practically hieroglyphic. The sound of the words is more or less indicated by their spelling, but after a time the written word in its entirety is taken to stand for the thing or idea it indicates, and thus is no longer phonetic, the whole word being grasped at once by the eye and conveying its meaning to the mind of the reader irrespective of the sound attributed to it, as definitely as an Egyptian hieroglyphic or a Chinese "character." This stage once reached, these familiar signs soon come to have an extraordinary power over the minds of those who are familiar with them. They are looked upon in a way as old friends with whom most people—but more especially those of literary tastes—are very loth to part. President ROOSEVELT may be powerful enough to do away with Trusts or even to bring about an amendment of the American Constitution in respect to the independence of individual States, but he is unable to alter the spelling of the English language. His experiment in that direction by having his message to Congress written with his own peculiar spelling was certainly a bold one; but it was met in a thoroughly characteristic manner. The papers simply translated the message and gave it in the ordinary spelling. However much they may be in favour of freedom in a general way, it is evident that American Editors as a body don't agree with Mrs. POYNER that "spellin' is an invasion of the right of private judgment."

If this is the feeling as to established written forms where the spelling is, at least in theory, phonetic, we can form some idea of the affection and reverence with which the Chinese are known to regard their written characters, and how difficult it would be to induce them to make any change. The character indeed has been one of the chief binding forces that has kept the Empire together. The spoken dialects may vary to such an extent that Chinese from different Provinces have great difficulty in communicating with each other verbally, but they have always as a last resort the written language which is known to them all; and this forms a tie of much more than mere literary force. Indeed it has probably done more to keep China together than anything else. The Chinaman feels a certain community with all who understand his written language. Had this not been the case the drift of Chinese thought would no doubt have been very different from that which it has been. With a common written language the different Provinces have all studied in the original the same classical books. They read the works of the great classics with various pronunciations assigned to the characters, but the characters themselves have, to all, the same meaning. Had an alphabetical system been adopted, the spelling in the different Provinces would no doubt have varied as the pronunciation of the words changed and, instead of different dialects, we should in the course of time have had different languages, and with the different languages in all probability different political ideas and aspirations. The Classics would no doubt have held their own, but in many parts of China

they would in the course of time have come to be regarded, no doubt, as great works, but still in some degree in the light of curiosities—in fact, much as scholars regard the writings of SPENSER in the present day.

It is worth noticing that an attempt was made in Korea as far back as the tenth century to reduce Chinese to a phonetic system—the Buddhists having then introduced a written script of Chinese with a perfect alphabet of twenty-five letters, which is indeed in use for business purposes and the like to the present day; but it has never been accepted by the educated classes, who, look upon it, as is pointed out by Sir WALTER HILLIER, as suitable only for women and children. That writer states that one effect of the use of this phonetic writing has been to stereotype the ancient pronunciation of Chinese words, which has been lost in China itself, and that the language of the Koreans contains a large admixture of Chinese words pronounced in the old way. From this we may infer that had an alphabetical system been adopted in China itself, the spelling of a large number of words would have varied so much in different provinces that actually new languages would have arisen, in place of merely the various dialects which now exist. Thus we should have had different languages in China from a common origin, just as there are different tongues in Europe derived in the main from Latin. With such new languages there would be new ideas, and with the fresh views, a much greater tendency to political separation than has been the case. There is nothing which makes more for a common nationality than a common language, and it has been fortunate for Chinese unity that she has been able to preserve at all events one written language throughout her vast Empire.

PECKSNIFFIAN PROTESTATIONS

(Daily Press, March 6th.)

MR. HUGH CLIFFORD, whose name has been made more familiar in Hongkong lately by his promotion to Ceylon, wrote for *MacMillan's Magazine* an article discussing and criticizing the American policy in the Philippines. Manila Americans do not seem to have appreciated the article. Mr. CLIFFORD's view was that it was foolish of the people of the United States to attempt or hope to establish among a Malay people a republican form of government, with republican ideals. He declared that the Americans in the Philippines were "chasing a phantom hope which flew in the face of all experience, and that the end must be defeat and disaster." He further expressed the opinion that the only reasonable policy in such a place and with such conditions would be to hold and administer the country as a Colony pure and simple. One American critic of the article admits that this would be easier to do than what they are attempting, by which we feel inclined to read that he means also it would be more expedient and practicable; but there are reasons why he should denounce and repudiate the CLIFFORD system of governing Malays. These reasons are, as we shall try to indicate, mainly of the nature of shibboleths; but first it is convenient to point out how much handicapped is the impartial and unbiased mind that seeks to contemplate such a question. It is so much more easy to side either with Mr. HUGH CLIFFORD or with the *Manila Times*, because the really impartial outlook, as exemplified in the case of a student of

history in the broad mass, cannot but be academic and unsatisfactory. It is easier to be a partisan than a philosopher, and the former is always more popular. The first aspect of such a discussion that meets the mental eye of a student of history familiar with the effects and non-effects of the contact of civilization and barbarism, of ideals and practices, evokes memories of the school laboratory. Those chemical experiments that occasionally would "come out right" nearly always made a stink, and sometimes nearly blew up the enthusiastic "messenger," as his less scientific contemporaries called him. The same may be said of most efforts, consciously directed, to civilize a people of vastly different constitution to the volunteer reformers. The experimenters in China have met with both smells and explosions, and no fusion can be said to have so far "come out right". So with India and Africa, and—tell it not in the *Manila Times*—with America. Mr. HUGH CLIFFORD and his kind are "messengers," as are the American flouters of "the inalienable rights of man," only in a less degree. To none of them does success come as it is dreamed of. But on the whole—and if this be partisanship, we cannot help it—we are inclined to think that Mr. HUGH CLIFFORD has a better case than his critics have. The *Manila Times* particularly, makes answer in a manner fatally susceptible to analysis. To follow the advice of British critics of American administration in the Philippines, "we would need," urges that journal, "to renounce our traditions, strangle our Constitution, and do violence to every political principle fundamental in our national life." But yes, and has that never been done? In America the tradition that all men were created equal was renounced some time ago; at least, so the Chinese and Negroes tell us. In America the Constitution is often strangled, so good Americans have declared. And in America, fundamental politics have suffered violence frequently, unless American newspapers do lie. Hence there is something strangely unconvincing in passages such as this:

"We are not yet ready to desert all those glorious doctrines embodied in our Constitution and our Declaration of Independence, or to forswear that divine principle blazoned forth in the torch of the Goddess of Liberty. In humbler phrase, the tail is not big enough to wag the dog. We are not prepared to let the Philippines run the United States, and even at the risk of making a failure of our experiment in grafting a republican form of government on an oriental people, we shall still hold fast to our heritage and history as a nation and to those principles of popular government of which we are the foremost exponents. We are not yet ready to assassinate the sublime injunction imposed upon us to see that government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

That sort of thing sounds fine, but, as our cousins say, "it cuts no ice." It that blessed formula "government of, by, and for the people" means anything, it means that every distinct people shall follow its own preferences, and the fundamental policy of America, as modernly illustrated, is to interfere like other Imperialistic nations with national preferences. Though this unctuous critic does not realize it, it is in essence less tyrannical to conquer and rule a people than to conquer and force a people to rule themselves on the conqueror's pattern. One is injury; the other is injury plus insult. It is transparent hypocrisy to say to any people, "we being kind and tolerant, will leave you to rule yourselves as soon as you show signs of knowing how to do so in our way."

Manhood is less degraded when told "we, being stronger, mean to rule you as we think best for us and you." There seems less shame in being shown that one's physique is inadequate than in being told that one's intellect is inferior. This is the point of view that sent the martyrs to their deaths. It scarcely needs proving. The *Manila Times* cited India, with its "people sullen and discontented," as a proof that Mr. HUGH CLIFFORD's opinion was wrong, so it is not unfair to point to America to show that the Constitution is waste-paper preserved only by a few sentimentals, and that its equality and inalienable rights are as much disregarded as the average pulpit oration. If the Philippines Republic of the future is no greater success than that of the United States, as viewed from the platform of the lovers of truth and liberty, then the less hustling "messengers," who have been satisfied to retain monarchies and other old-fashioned things and ways, need never feel chagrin for their own backwardness. If none preached Buddhism but those who have become Mahatmas, the unregenerate would be saved a good deal of wordy nuisance. The people with the noblest constitution in the world are like others less gifted, still wandering through an imperfect world of illusion and disappointment. Utopia is not yet, not even in the wide area between San Francisco and New York. We miss it less, however, in the places where it is not the subject of so much cant and ranting. Wise Americans like Mr. J. L. CLEMENS do not grieve over the failure to achieve the ideal. That was only to be expected. They do, however, blush for their compatriots who persist in calling outside attention to it by their Pecksniffian protestations.

A PRUDISH PLAGUE PRECAUTION.

(Daily Press, 7th March.)

Fielding and other writers have given us vivid impressions of the medical men of the past; of how, by quoting GALEN and PARACELSUS and too often, we fear, such authorities as ABRACADABRA, they managed to impress an ignorant and credulous public with their learning and ability. Happily the day of such arrant charlatans is past. The medical men do really know something of disease and medicine, as well as of Latin, while the public is less ignorant and (in some ways) less credulous. The doctors and their patients, indeed, know so much nowadays that there are occasionally symptoms of mental over-feeding. In the case of the patient, it is the "little learning" that "is a dangerous thing." The way men and women, especially in the Far East, dose themselves with drugs without professional advice is most alarming. The waters of Jordan, parabling temperance and cleanliness, are not enough for them; they put great faith in the rivers of Abana and Pharpar, meaning the bottles they buy at the chemists, or pass from one to another. In the case of our modern professional men, we are almost tempted sometimes to think that too much learning has made them mad. We have often called attention to the neurotic alarms of the *Lancet*, a journal which is enough to drive a susceptible laity to wholesale suicide, in order to escape the countless perils that omniscient organ so glibly portrays. This and other manifestations of monomania, which we may dub microbe-mania, may generally be passed (with a deprecatory shrug by the intelligent citizen who avoids excesses either physical or mental—for panic is as deadly as potatoes. Occasionally, however, the

enthusiastic experts threaten to trample over the corns of the public, and then a serious protest is called for.

This preamble brings us to the last meeting of the Hongkong Sanitary Board, and the recommendation by the Medical Officer of Health that licences should be withheld from restaurants that can boast of ceilings. Property owners and landlords at Hongkong are long-suffering, but we should expect a storm of denunciation of this precedent. We consider it monstrously foolish; and it will be monstrously unfair and tyrannical if it ever be allowed to creep in as a bit of practical legislation. For the moment, our report yesterday indicates that it was too much even for the Sanitary Board; but we would like some assurance that there is to be a stopping place for the enthusiasm of our too enthusiastic sanitary experts. Because "rats are very frequently found in these eating houses," and because some rats have been known to carry plague germs, the Medical Officer of Health would deprive a caterer of his livelihood and the public of a convenience, unless and until the said caterer remove from his premises an important part of the property that belongs to his landlord. And some of the members talked about "compensation," as if any monetary allowance could compensate the public for having foisted upon them for all time a precedent of professional folly and professional tyranny. All honour to Mr. LAU CHU-PAK for talking of its fardship and absurdity. Either plain words must be used now, or we will be bothered again. Just consider the futility of such a performance, transcending in uselessness all other futilities for which we previously may have had to thank the expert advisers of our sanitary authorities. Suppose all the ceilings in Hongkong were done away with, would there be no more rats? Not even the Medical Officer of Health dare tell us that. But even if the answer be "yes," are there no other carriers of plague germs? What step will the Medical Officer of Health propose to keep out cockroaches and flies? That we should abolish houses altogether, and live in tents or on rafts? Cockroaches and flies carry plague, we are told, and the only person we can think of as safe from their trespasses is the corpse in his new coffin. Rats may be "very frequently found in these eating houses"; it is where we should expect to find them, so we suppose Mr. HOOPER's speculation of "curious" was ironical. But they do not live between the ceiling and the floor above, though they seem to prefer that locality for a nocturnal gymnasium. Any one who knows anything of ordinary building, of the average domicile, knows that the rat would be none the less snug if deprived of his ceiling parade. Mr. LAU CHU-PAK reminds us that, if the rats would be no worse off the poor human hips would infallibly be so. He remarked:

"In a business of this kind ceilings are most necessary, as they make the shop attractive and prevent dust and dirt from falling on the food on a lower floor from an upper floor. Chinese floors, before the existing Public Health and Building Ordinance was enacted, were so peculiarly constructed that it would be impossible to keep dust and dirt from falling through without ceilings."

The Medical Officer of Health, if permitted to continue as he has begun, would soon change the public eating-house beyond all recognition. Dust, as he well knows, is pregnant with germs; the *Lancet* says so, even to the point of warning us against a day-old blotting pad. What will be proposed, therefore, when the public "chow" is found to be largely seasoned with dust? The logical conclusion of his own method

would seem to demand the removal of the upper storeys altogether, so that our licensed restaurants of the future would all be low bungalows. Even a roof would collect and at intervals shower down germiniferous debris, so that the public would finally (if any survived the horrible dangers everywhere surrounding us) take their meals in a compound open to the sky. Then if it rained, the water analysts would step in; rain water is rank poison; what would happen next even our prophetic afflatus refuses to divulge. With all respect to the President of the Board, we think we can "do other than agree with the recommendation of the Medical Officer of Health," and we trust that the present failure will suggest to him to "go slow," and not to ask us, every time a fertile imagination hits upon a costly way of scotching part of an evil, to trip everything and follow the scotching crusade. We must consider ultimate results, look ahead along every path that seems to open out, and, in short, we ought to be satisfied that "the game is worth the candle." This game wasn't, and we hope to be given a rest from similar unclasp proposals for a time at least.

THE CHINA SOCIETY.

(Daily Press, 8th March.)

The newly constituted China Society can do no harm, and it may do good. The mere names of its sponsors promise much:

"The Chinese Minister in London, Wang Ta-Sieh, and Sir Robert Douglas, Professor of Chinese at King's College, and Keeper of Oriental Books and Manuscripts at the British Museum, are the presidents of the society; and amongst its vice-presidents are the American and Japanese Ambassadors in London, Sir Claude Macdonald, his Majesty's Ambassador at Tokyo, Sir John Jordan, his Majesty's Minister at Peking, Lord Strathearn, Admiral of the Fleet Sir Edward Seymour, Sir Alfred Hall, Sir Cecil Clementi Smith, Sir John McLeavy Brown, Mr. R. S. Gundry, chairman of the Chi Association. Mr. George Jamieson, formerly British Consul-General at Shanghai, is chairman of council, with Sir Walter Hillier as vice-chairman, whilst Mr. Ivan Chen, Secretary of the Chinese Legation, and Mr. Byron Brennan, late of the British Consular service in China, have undertaken to act as honorary secretaries. Mr. A. M. Townsend, manager of the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank, 37, Lombard-street, E.C., is honorary treasurer.

But there is a tendency in some of the Home papers to attach to it more importance than it perhaps deserves. One credits the Japan Society with "dispelling many erroneous conceptions"—it has perpetuated some—and with "preparing the public mind for the great change that has taken place in the relations of Japan with the Western world." This was done, and well done, by some of the numerous writers and journalists who "adopted" Japan, and men like Togo and Ito completed their work. Still, it will not be the fault of the new China Society if the foreign public does not learn as much of China's history and literature as the China Association has taught of her politics and trade. The good masters have attentive students, however. One journal, after a hasty glance that "what is generally known among us about China does not amount to very much," proceeds to impress its readers, on the strength of the Chinese Minister's inaugural lecture with the antiquity of China's "democratic constitutionalism." It seems to think it matters that the most skilled ethnologist probably would not pretend to state with certainty who the ancestors of the British were three thousand years ago, thereby ignoring a fact actually pointed out at the same meeting of the China Society, that Chinese ethnologists are in similar doubt.

It assumes that the democratic and constitutional ideals of bygone Chinese were actually practised, whereas in the discussion that followed, the Rev. G. OWEN regarded the *Chou Li* as more or less of a political romance like PLATO's "Republic," and even went so far—as to declare that some of those noble ideals were "manifestly impracticable." The ancient literature so interestingly translated for the China Society (extracts from which will appear in an early issue) and the statements of some of the debaters, promised more for reform in China than competent modern observers seem inclined to do. In this connection we may direct special attention to the article on page 5 of this issue, headed "The Reform Movement in China." The Censorate of China is one example of an excellent ideal, but it is notorious how it works in practice. It kills that independence of competent officials for which the correspondent pleads towards the close of his able article, and it fits in with all kinds of typical intrigue and corruption.

HONGKONG SANITARY BOARD.

A meeting of the Sanitary Board was held on March 5th at the Board Room. The Hon. Dr. J. M. Atkinson (president) presided, and there were also present Dr F. Clark, Medical Officer of Health, Hon. Mr. A. W. Brown (Registrar General), Hon. Mr. F. J. Badeley (Captain-Superintendent of Police), Dr. H. MacFarlane, Assistant Medical Officer of Health, Lieut. Colonel Reid, R.A.M.C., Mr. H. Humphreys, Mr. Shelton Hooper, Mr. Lau Chu-pak, Mr. Fung Wa chun and Mr. G. A. Woodcock (secretary).

NEW MARKET FOR KOWLOON POINT.

The REGISTRAR-GENERAL laid before the Board a minute which read: I find that in October 1900, the Government promised to prepare a scheme for providing a market at Kowloon Point for the sale of European food. The non-Chinese population of the Kowloon peninsula was then 895; it is now 2,245. In 1901 the European population was 668; it is now 1,467. I should like these facts brought to the notice of the Board.

The PRESIDENT—This was brought up before the Board at last meeting, when consideration was postponed. It originated in a minute from the Registrar-General.

The REGISTRAR-GENERAL moved that the attention of the Government be drawn to the matter, and that it be asked to make provision in next year's estimates for a market at Kowloon Point.

The CAPTAIN SUPERINTENDENT of POLICE seconded, and the motion was agreed to.

PROPOSED FUKINESE CEMETERY.

Correspondence was again laid before members regarding the proposed cemetery for Fukinese at Kowloon City.

The PRESIDENT—The papers have been circulated and members will recollect that two sites were proposed, one consisting of .48 of an acre and the other of .97 of an acre. The Surveyor minutes that these places are to the north-west of the rifle range, the first, which is almost an acre in extent, being on the hillside and the second, He thought both sites suitable for the purpose but suggests that the smaller should be used for a Fukinese cemetery as the Fukinese are but a small community. The Medical Officer of Health agrees with the suggestion, and I move that the Board recommend the Governor-in-Council to allocate this lot as a cemetery.

Mr. LAU CHU-PAK seconded.

Mr. HOOPER—If members read my minute they will see I am quite in agreement with the motion, providing the land is handed over to the Government and the cemetery subject to Sanitary Board regulations.

The PRESIDENT—It will be conducted in accordance with the Ordinance.

Mr. HOOPER—No.

The REGISTRAR-GENERAL—Do they need to hand it over to the Government?

Mr. HOOPER—I think they should. The Commission is reporting on cemeteries in

general and their administration, and we found that there were many cemeteries over which we had no jurisdiction, except from a sanitary point of view.

The REGISTRAR-GENERAL.—I think Mr. Hooper cannot have read the letter. The applicant states that it is his intention to give it up as a donation for the use of his countrymen as a cemetery.

Mr. HOOPER.—Yes, I know, but does he surrender it up to the Government?

The PRESIDENT.—He goes on to say: "If, from a sanitary point of view the site is not suitable, I am prepared to surrender it to the Crown in exchange for a suitable site," so I think he is prepared to hand it over to the Government.

Mr. HOOPER.—I am quite satisfied if that is so.

The PRESIDENT.—I move that the Board recommend that this offer be accepted on the understanding that this cemetery comes within schedule B of the Chinese Cemetery byelaws.

Mr. HOOPER.—That is what I mean, but I think the donor does not want fees charged on the ground that he is presenting the cemetery to his own people.

The MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.—Section A of the said schedule is free.

Mr. LAU CHU-PAK.—Before granting this application I think the Registrar-General should see this man and ascertain his views.

Members concurred.

MORE WELLS.

Correspondence was submitted relative to the wells in the back yards of certain houses in Lower Rutter Street.

Mr. HOOPER stated, before the subject was broached, that he had given orders to have the wells filled up, but his engineer pointed out that there were pools on Crown Land below Rutter Street and if the wells were closed the tenants would go to these pools for water. This water was used largely for potable purposes and for making food to supply those who go to the theatre close by.

The PRESIDENT.—That settles it then.

CEILINGS OF EATING HOUSES.

Correspondence was submitted relative to the removal of ceilings in eating houses.

The MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH intimated that the application before the Board was for a new licence which he recommended should not be issued until the ceilings of the house were removed. As explained in a previous paper, the objection to ceilings was that they harboured rats, and this applied more forcibly in the case of eating houses as there was so much food lying about.

Mr. LAU CHU-PAK.—The Board has no power to compel people to remove ceilings where no plague cases have occurred. In a business of this kind ceilings are most necessary, as they make the shop attractive and prevent dust and dirt from falling on the food on a lower floor from an upper floor. Chinese floors, before the existing Public Health and Building Ordinance was enacted, were so peculiarly constructed that it would be impossible to keep dust and dirt from falling through without ceilings. It is a hardship on this class of shopmen to impose such a condition as that suggested by the Medical Officer of Health. The ceilings are the owner's property, which it is absurd to call upon the tenant to remove. It is just the same as telling the applicant that, unless he destroys and pays for certain property belonging to his landlord, he cannot be allowed to trade in the Colony. I don't see any difference between the case of renewals, and that of new licences. The ruling of the Government should be adhered to as the ceilings have been in existence all these years.

Mr. HUMPHREYS.—If the Board has no power, as Mr. Lau Chu-pak contends, there is no need for discussion, but if it has I am not in favour of forcing the tenant to remove these ceilings.

Mr. FUNG WA-CHUN.—I am not in favour of these ceilings being removed.

The REGISTRAR-GENERAL.—These licences are issued by the Colonial Secretary, and all we are asked to do here is to give the Colonial Secretary the opinion of the Board on the subject. It has already been decided in the case of renewals that the Colonial Secretary does not feel called upon to ask licencees to pull down ceilings, and we might add that in the opinion

of the Board it is inadvisable to ask those who apply for licences to remove ceilings.

The PRESIDENT.—It is a recommendation by the Medical Officer of Health as a plague preventive measure.

Mr. HUMPHREYS.—Will the tenant get any compensation for the ceilings that have been removed?

The PRESIDENT.—Yes.

The CAPTAIN SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE.—Have more rats been found in these houses than in ordinary houses?

The PRESIDENT.—I cannot say off hand.

The MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.—Rats are very frequently found in these eating houses.

Mr. HOOPER.—Curious!

The PRESIDENT.—Compensation, I understand, is not given in these cases. There can be no doubt that if a plague-infected rat did get into the floor above the ceiling in all probability the food might be contaminated. That being so we cannot do other than agree with the recommendation of the Medical Officer of Health, but it is for the Board to recommend compensation for the ceiling being removed as a plague preventive measure. I move that the Board recommend that the licence be not issued until the ceilings are removed, and that compensation be paid when they are.

The motion found no seconder, so the REGISTRAR GENERAL moved an amendment that the Colonial Secretary be asked to consider applications for new licences in the same way as it has been decided to treat applications for renewals of licences.

Mr. FUNG WA-CHUN seconded and the motion was carried.

MORE MODIFICATIONS.

Correspondence was submitted relative to a modification of the requirements of sections 153 and 180 of the Public Health and Building Ordinance 1903 in respect of the house on Kowloon Island Lot No. 1,186 (Argyle Street, Ho Man Tin).

Mr. LAU CHU-PAK intimated—This is practically a plan of the type of houses, with slight modifications, which the Chinese build in their own villages. It is certainly better lighted and ventilated than the Chinese buildings we have now amongst us.

The REGISTRAR GENERAL.—Before the Board passes an opinion on these plans they ought to be referred to a committee to consider whether they will be acceptable to the Chinese, or whether any modifications are required to make them more susceptible.

The Medical Officer of Health, the Registrar General and Mr. Hooper were appointed a sub-committee to consider the matter.

EXCELLENT WATER.

Mr. Frank Brown's analysis of samples of water taken from various sources of the Government supply show that it is of excellent quality.

MORTALITY STATISTICS.

At a death rate per 1,000 per annum, the mortality statistics of the whole Colony for the week ended February 16th show a percentage of 2.2 against 16.1 for the corresponding week last year.

The PRESIDENT remarked that these statistics were made up from the new census returns.

RAT RETURN.

Of the 629 rats caught in the Colony during the week ending March 2nd, not one was infected. Returns for 1906 show a capture of 30,701 rats, of which 679 were infected.

MR. HOOPER AND THE SANITARY SURVEYOR. Re the drainage of Ko Shing Street. Mr. Jackman in reply to Mr. Hooper's criticisms wrote to the Board stating that he was unaware of the position of the storm water drain when he approved Messrs. Leigh and Orange's plan, or he would have notified them. But he strongly emphasised the fact that it was not part of the duties of the sanitary surveyor to verify anything in a plan submitted to ascertain whether the proposals it contained were feasible or not. It was only his duty to see whether a proposal complied with the requirements laid down in the Ordinance, and to approve if so complying. Moreover, the Ordinance specifically threw the responsibility entirely on the architect (section 212). Mr. Jackman then referred to section 3 of Drainage Byelaws, and wished to point out, apart purely

from the official objections, that to accept the responsibility of being answerable for any proposal sent in would be impossible. In addition to storm water drains and sewers which were found on such comparative levels as to make the passing of either under or over the other an impossibility, the gas and water mains often presented the same obstacles, and neither here nor in any town in Great Britain were the comparative levels of either drains, sewers or mains kept with such accuracy as to make it possible. The practice here was the same as at home, and architects were given every information possible on application, and they were also given every opportunity by permits for opening to obtain such information as is necessary for submitting a plan which can be carried out. He considered that the attempt to saddle the consequences of sending in a plan on insufficient information, on himself, or on any other official, was absolutely unwarranted. There were two remarks made by Mr. Hooper which required correction: he stated that a new drainage plan was being submitted, and that the writer had not given proper levels. In the case of the former remark, the few lines on the old plan had been altered and the plan returned, and, in the latter remark, he had not given any levels at any time in connection with this plan. Finally, it was very unfair to officials that criticism such as Mr. Hooper's should appear in the Press before an official had had an opportunity of defending himself. He recognised that he had had an opportunity of defence, but it was apparent to everyone that where an attack and defence were not published at the same time there was a tendency for false impressions to spread abroad.

Mr. HOOPER intimated to Messrs. Leigh and Orange's reply to Mr. Jackman on the merits of the case. As to Mr. Jackman's remarks that I have been unfair to him in calling the Board's attention to the matter, I regret to say that, as at the present time the Board has no authority over the officers of the department, to do as I did is the only effective way to procure proper investigation, but I quite agree that final judgment should be withheld until an officer has had an opportunity to answer a complaint. If Mr. Jackman is still aggrieved, let the papers be sent to H. E. the Governor.

Mr. HOOPER.—I would add on to that, that I disclaim any personal feeling against Mr. Jackman, and it is only to call attention to the system that I made these remarks. Mr. Jackman admits that he did not know of the existence of a Government sewer in Ko Shing Street, and the Government did not know the depth, but as I said, we had to go to the expense of sending in fresh plans. Mr. Jackman rather disputes that, because he says instead of sending in fresh plans the plans were sent back and had to be altered. That is a quibble I don't intend to answer. The sooner the system that prevails is done away with, the better.

The PRESIDENT.—With reference to Mr. Jackman's statement that he was unaware of the position of the storm water drains there are many drains in the Colony that no one is aware of until the digging up is commenced.

THE STRANDED "HONGKONG."

On March 5th Captain Groves returned to port from the wreck of the s.s. *Hongkong* near Hainan Head. The captain left for the scene of the wreck on the French cruiser *Atger* on February 25th and reports that on arrival there was a gale of wind and very thick weather. The cruiser first passed the scene of the wreck and went to Hoihow where information was gained that the ship was intact. At Hoihow junks were engaged and towed to a safe anchorage eight miles from the position of the stranded steamer where the salvage gear was discharged into lighters. When the steamer *Hailan* arrived on the scene the French cruiser ceased operations after discharging the salvage gear provided by the Dock Co. The wrecked steamer appears to be perfectly upright, but the heavy weather prevailing has washed her higher on the beach, and unless more favourable circumstances prevail, prospects of refloating her are remote.

SUPREME COURT.

Tuesday, 5th March.

IN ORIGINAL JURISDICTION.

BEFORE SIR FRANCIS PIGGOTT (CHIEF JUSTICE).

THE IMPERSONATION CASE.

The Chief Justice delivered judgment in the action brought by Cheung Shu against Ma Fu San.

Mr. M. W. Slade, instructed by Mr. D. V. Steavenson (of Messrs. Deacon, Looker and Deacon) appeared for the plaintiff, the defendant being represented by Sir Henry Berkeley, K.C., and Hon. Mr. H. E. Pollock, K.C., who were instructed by Mr. C. F. Dixon (of Messrs. Hastings' office).

His Honour said:—I have already given judgment on the facts of this case reserving the points of law for fuller consideration: with these points I now proceed to deal. The first point is whether in a Civil action in which the plaintiff sues as Executor, producing the probate, it is competent for the defendant to deny the death of the testator. This point is decided in the affirmative in *Allen v. Dundas* (3 T. R. at page 130) and in *Moons v. De Bernales* (1 Russ. 301): the reason given in the earlier case being that if in fact the person is living the Court has no jurisdiction and the probate can have no effect. These cases are still cited as authorities (see *William on Executors* 10th Ed. p. 440 et seq.) but I suppose they could not apply where the Court of Probate has, in contentious proceedings, expressly found the death of the Testator to be a fact: for that would be to impeach the judgment of Court. I admitted evidence to show that the alleged testator was alive, and have found as a fact that he was dead. I have also held that the defendant is not a bona fide mortgagee within the meaning of the section. But even if he himself had been perfectly bona fide "registration cannot make good an instrument which is otherwise fraudulent and void" (*Dart* vol. I p. 699), and I have found this mortgage to be fraudulent and therefore void. I must however deal with the point which arises as to the construction of the Land Registration Ordinance, No. 1 of 1844—which is exceedingly troublesome. That Ordinance was passed to prevent secret and fraudulent conveyances, and to provide means whereby the title to real and immoveable property may be easily traced and ascertained. It provides that wills, as well as judgments and other documents affecting lands tenements or premises in the Colony, are to be registered: in the case of wills, within one month after the death of the deviser, if he dies in the Colony, and within 12 months if he dies elsewhere. The effect is twofold: 1st. The wills are to take priority if registered within the prescribed delays, not according to the dates of registration, but "only in the same manner as if the Ordinance had not been passed." Secondly: If they are not registered within these delays respectively, they are to be absolutely null and void as against subsequent bona fide purchasers or mortgagees for valuable consideration: and then, are to take priority according to their dates of registration. The questions I have to decide are:—1st. Whether probates of wills affecting leaseholds must be registered in order to obtain the benefits of the Ordinance: in other words, whether I am justified in substituting probate for wills in the Ordinance. Secondly: Whether, in spite of the provisions of the Probate Law, wills affecting leaseholds must be registered in order to obtain the benefits of the Ordinance. With regard to the second point I have been much perplexed by the fact that an Executor's first duty is to deposit the will in the Registry of the Supreme Court for purposes of Probate, and that thereafter the Registrar cannot part with the original will. It would seem therefore, if this were the proper construction of the Ordinance, as if the Executor was bound to call in at the Land Office to register the will on his way to the Registry of the Court. But if this were to be the practice, all sorts of difficulties might arise, for a will might be registered in the Land Office, which might never be admitted to probate. I doubt however whether

the Land Officer would be justified in registering a will unless probate had been granted, because he would be putting on the register a person who by law has no title. This at once indicates one of the reasons why the law should be construed strictly according to the words used in it. On the other hand I must note that the Ordinance only provides for the registration of a "memorial," that is of certain particulars of the will, verified by affidavit; and there is nothing that I can see which compels the production of the will itself in the Land Office, though I have no doubt that the Land Officer would not be justified in registering a memorial of a will until the probate had been produced, the registration of a memorial of a will deposited in the Registry for Probate is therefore possible: and this really disposes of the first point, for if the Ordinance can be complied with, it is unnecessary to substitute "probate" for will in the Ordinance. If it were necessary however, I should not do it, for there is no warrant for such a change: and I may point out that in many of the sections of the Yorkshire Registry Act, 1834, it has been thought advisable to refer to probates as well as to wills. I have therefore to consider whether the Act requires memorial of wills of leaseholds to be registered. First, is there any reason why it should have so provided? If there were any clear reason, I should be going contrary to the manifest intention of the Act in holding otherwise. I think there is no such reason. The law provided for the registration of wills of realty because they are documents of title, and there is no other official record of them. The legislature omitted to observe that there is no realty in the Colony devisable by will: but that is beside the point. But for wills of personality the law has provided another means of giving publicity to them: by means of Probate, which is a public document, and the public have access to the Probate Registry for search. But there are many reasons why it should not have so provided. I am sure, as I have said, that a will which has not been admitted to probate could not or should not be registered. There is thus a manifest possibility of a clash between the requirements of the two laws of Probate and of Land Registry; the most obvious being a delay in the grant of probate, which might preclude the registration in the Land Office within the requisite limits of time, and there is no provision made for extending the time allowed for registration. Again, when wills are registered out of time, the question of priority arises, and then between two probates assuming the wills to deal with the same property, which is manifestly inconsistent with legal consequences attached to probate. Therefore I come to the construction, and I find that the words used in s. 6 of the Ordinance with regard to memorials are inapt to wills of leaseholds. The registration of memorial of the will is to be by the "deviser," and the testator is called the "deviser." There is no such thing as devise of leaseholds. Then again, how is the person entitled under the will, constructing "deviser" in its largest possible meaning, to get hold of the will or the probate in order to prepare the memorial: quite apart from the short time, in the case where the testator has died in the Colony, within which he would have to do it? For these reasons I am of opinion that wills of leasehold do not come within the provisions of the Land Registry Ordinance. I am re-inforced in this opinion by the fact that there is a note on the *Middlesex Registration Act*, in *Underhill's Encyclopaedia of Forms and Precedents* (vol. xi., p. 270), to the same effect.

O YAN TSAI v. FOOK ON INSURANCE COMPANY.

The Chief Justice gave judgment in this action.

Mr. M. W. Slade, instructed by Mr. C. F. Dixon (of Mr. John Hastings' office) appeared for the plaintiff, while Hon. Mr. H. E. Pollock K.C., instructed by Mr. Jackson (of Messrs. Johnson, Stokes and Master), represented the defendants.

His Honour said:—Having admitted evidence in order to clear up what I held to be a latent ambiguity in the policy sued on in this case, I have now to consider the effect of that evidence. It reveals a very remarkable case of coincidence. The plaintiff, or to be more

accurate, the plaintiff's father O Yik Tong on his behalf purchased some few years ago an old Chinese gunboat, and spent considerable sums of money in converting her into a merchant vessel for the purpose of coastwise trade, in putting her into a seaworthy condition, and generally in effecting improvements on her. He named her the "Macao." He had never insured her on her voyages; but in the month of August, 1906, having in contemplation a somewhat longer voyage than usual, to Amoy, about the middle of the ensuing month, he endeavoured to effect an insurance on her for fifty or sixty thousand dollars, his estimate of her value being "ninety odd thousand." He seems to have had some difficulty at first in doing this, but at length matters were arranged through an intermediary, with the defendant Company, who first agreed to take a risk up to \$31,000; but afterwards, on or about 14th August, they agreed to take up \$40,000 if the plaintiff would himself insure her for the remaining \$55,000, he having given her value at \$95,000, and would not insure in any other company. The Policy was signed during the afternoon of 17th September, being timed to take effect from 7 p.m. on the day the final discussion took place. On the morning of the 18th a disastrous typhoon swept over the harbour, and the vessel sank before she started on her voyage. The curious part of the case is that the Fook On Company seems never to have insured a vessel before. A few days after the "Macao" sank a claim was made for payment of the insurance; the company repudiated all liability, on the following definite grounds—that the vessel had not started on her voyage, and that the premium had not been paid, but only guaranteed. Later on, the company based its refusal on another ground, which is in fact the defence raised in this action, that the policy was an "open" and not a "valued" policy, and that the Company was only liable to pay 40.96ths of the real value of the ship. Now there is not the slightest objection in law that I can see to the new position thus taken by the Company, though of course it may be matter of comment. They may have put forward untenable reasons for non-payment at first, and when they have consulted their legal advisers, they may put forward an entirely new ground of defence, on which they are entitled to succeed if it is a good defence. But this correspondence which was not put in but the purport of which the Company's Secretary admitted, does to my mind throw some light on what actually happened when the insurance was entered into: and unfortunately the advice he seems to have received has so tinged the recollection of the Secretary who conducted the negotiations, as to what took place, as to induce me with reluctance to say that I do not believe his evidence on a very material point. I now turn to the evidence of what took place which led to the use of the ambiguous term in the policy "the estimated value of the vessel is \$95,000." I have no doubt that O Yik Tong is right in his figures. I am satisfied that he has expended \$95,000 on the vessel though I am not quite satisfied that the whole of that sum would properly be taken to be her value if I were to hold that the policy is an open one. For some part of it, though how much I cannot say, seems to have been for repairs in consequence of ordinary wear and tear. On the other hand, I could not accept the valuation of Captain Douglas though I feel quite sure it is an accurate valuation of the market value of the ship—as the basis on which I should estimate her insurable value. It seems to me that to do this would destroy the quality of an insurance, that it is a contract of indemnity; for it is quite clear that the amount given by Captain Douglas would not enable the plaintiff to retrieve the position in which he was prior to the loss of the vessel, that is, again to become the owner of a freight-earning ship. The question whether a person who insures an old thing—whether it be a ship or any thing else—is entitled to be paid a sum which would purchase a new thing, is the practical question which must often present itself to Insurance Cos., and I am not sure that the law can help very much. There is no doubt that in some cases, as in the case of a house, the person who takes out a policy may be in a better position—having

a new house—than he was before the loss. But what the law does say is that he must not be in a worse position, otherwise insurance would cease to be a contract of indemnity. The only possible middle course in the case of a ship, admittedly old when purchased and on which money has been expended for constructive repairs, would be to award the owner enough money to enable him to purchase a vessel in as good a condition as his repaired vessel, supposing such a vessel to be on the market. But taking the case one step further, if a vessel has, as the Macao had, cost its owner a considerable sum for repairs of all sorts: if a vessel which he bought as a very old one has cost far more even than he anticipated, far more than its market value as a repaired ship, far more than any such ship ought to have cost him, why should he not insure her for the full amount which she has actually cost him? I know of no principle of law which prevents him: The law only steps in and says, "make it a matter of agreement with the Insurance Co. then you can recover." And it is in order to prevent all sorts of questions, such as those I have indicated, being raised after the loss has actually occurred, that the "valued policy" has been introduced into practice; and the law in dealing with them treats such policies by the light of the law applicable to similar contracts. If the assured has value his ship at so much, and the assurers have accepted the valuation, there is an end of the matter, save in the case of fraud, or perhaps such over-valuation as might be held to be evidence of fraud. But the question of fraud does not arise in this case. I have no doubt that O Yik Tong having expended such large sums on his vessel, did intend to insure her for as much as possible on the basis of that amount; the only question therefore is, did the Insurance Co. accept his valuation? The answer turns on the meaning of the words "estimated value" which were inserted in the policy, and as I have stated in my preliminary judgment, the solution of this ambiguous phrase must be either, that the Company accepted the estimate given by the plaintiff, or that they treated it merely as a basis for future negotiations as to what the actual value was, in the event of her being lost. This adopts the two meanings, indeed the only two meanings, which can be given to the words "estimated value." I have come to that conclusion that the Company accepted the estimate of value given by the plaintiff as the basis on which they entered into the contract of insurance. The reasons which induce me to come to this conclusion are the following:—The proposal was before the Company for about a month before it was actually effected: the original estimate of value being "90 odd" thousand dollars, which differs so inappreciably from the "95,000," afterwards adopted, as to be immaterial. The original offer of the company was to insure up to \$30,000, which was afterwards raised to \$40,000, showing clearly that the company must have devoted some consideration to the actual value of the vessel. Captain Douglas had retained from the Company to report on proposals for insurance: he did in fact report on the Macao in respect of her capacity to carry cargo on the voyage to Amoy. The Company, therefore, had it in their power to verify the plaintiff's estimate of value at any moment. They did not do so. The figure \$95,000 was in fact adopted as the basis of the contract, the Company insisting on the condition that the plaintiff should himself insure for the balance \$55,000. The Company did not, as they might as experienced insurers have done, put in words to the effect that they did not accept the plaintiff's estimate or valuation, which would have put the onus on the plaintiff in the event of loss of proving the actual insurance value of the ship reducing it an open policy. And if, after these considerations had been duly weighed, I had any doubts left as to what the intention of the Company really was, they vanish when I come to Ng San Kau's statement: "I understood it to be that we should take 40/95ths of \$95,000" or as he immediately changed it to "of the value of the ship." I regret that I cannot believe this introduction into his thoughts at that time of a matter which it is clear he had never thought of, and which was obviously the result of conference with his legal advisers. I am therefore of opinion that by

signing the policy the Company agreed to accept the estimate of value given by the plaintiff, which they had requested him to give, and which they inserted in the policy. With regard to the condition that the plaintiff himself should insure for \$55,000, I am of opinion that he has fulfilled it; for on the finding that the value of \$95,000 was taken as the basis of the insurance, the balance \$55,000 was not insured in any other company, and therefore the plaintiff was in fact his own insurer to this amount: this was the amount which, from his own point of view and accepted by the Company, he himself had at risk.

Judgment must therefore be for the plaintiff with costs.

MANY CLAIMANTS.

The Fat Kee firm and the Hung Sheung firm were plaintiffs, and the defendants were Chan Wai Chi and the Official Receiver in the bankruptcy of the Kwong Yik Wo and the Yau On Marine and Fire Insurance Company Ltd., and Chai Kee.

The Hon. Mr. H. E. Pollock, K.C., instructed by Mr. Bowley of Messrs. Denny and Bowley appeared for Fat Kee and Hung Sheung. Sir Henry Berkeley, K.C., instructed by Mr. Holbrow, of Messrs. Deacon, Looker and Deacon, acted for the Yau On Company, who, it was explained, were plaintiffs as well as claimants in the issue. Mr. M. Slade, instructed by Mr. Wilkinson, represented Chan Wai Chi, and Mr. Calthrop appeared for Chai Kee, one of the defendants.

The plaintiffs are merchants carrying on business at 5 On Ta Street, Victoria, while the defendant is a ship carpenter carrying on business at 179 Wing Lok Street, La King Shek, who traded under the style and name of the Kwong Yik Wo carried on business as a flour merchant until 22nd January, 1905, when he absconded from the Colony. This firm of Kwong Yik Wo had borrowed large sums of money at interest from the plaintiffs. The sums were: \$24,000 on 28th March, 1904, from the Fat Kee, \$10,000 on 23rd May, 1904, from the Hung Sheung, \$10,000 on 18th October, 1904, from the Fat Kee, \$10,000 on the same date from the Hung Sheung, and \$24,000 on 25th October, 1904, from both firms jointly. The rate of interest was varied from time to time by mutual agreement and the said loans with the exception of the last named were renewed from time to time. The sum of upwards of \$87,000 was still owing by the Kwong Yik Wo firm to the plaintiffs. Defendants gave large quantities of flour in security, 72,000 bags in all, these being stored in the godowns of the Hop Yik Chan, which firm agreed to hold the bags to the order of the plaintiffs. Subsequently many of the bags were wrongfully removed by the Kwong Yik Wo firm and secretly disposed of. On the 22nd January, 1905, 31,000 bags were taken away by Chan Wai Chi who stored them in the godowns of the Po On Company, 19,000 in the name of Wing Kee and 14,000 in the name of Chai Kee. On the 27th February, 1905, prior to the commencement of these proceedings, Chan Wai Chi wrongfully caused 4,000 bags out of the said 14,000 to be removed from the godowns of the Po On Company. These could not be traced. The 10,000 bags had been sold under order of the Court and the proceeds lodged in Court pending the decision in this action. The claimants said they were entitled to the proceeds of the sale, \$25,500 and the value of the 4,000 bags, \$9,800, a total of \$35,300. The Yau On Marine and Fire Insurance Company of 3 Bonham Strand West asserted that the firm agreed to maintain the value of the security at an amount exceeding that of the outstanding loans. They claim that they have the first charge on the flour and neither the plaintiffs nor the defendants nor other of the parties have any interest therein until these charges have been satisfied. There was now due on that claim \$110,000 principal, \$14,592 arrears of interest, a total of \$124,592 which less \$4,362 received on account left a balance of \$120,230 still due. The Yau On firm pressed for a declaration that they had the first charges on the 27,000 bags of flour in question and asked for payment out of Court of \$21,636 being proceeds of the sale of 10,000 bags and payment by defendant of \$98,593, as damages, being the difference between the said \$120,230

and the said \$21,636, together with interest on the said amount at eight per cent. The defendant Chan Wai Chi in his statement of defence stated that he had in his possession or power documents relating to the matters in question but he objected to produce them on the ground that they were privileged communications between client, solicitor and counsel.

Mr. Pollock opened the case for the plaintiffs and said that the action was originally commenced by the Fat Kee and the Hung Sheung against the Po On Insurance Company and Chan Wai Chi. The Po On got out of the issue, leaving several claimants in the field.

His Honour:—Does anybody appear for the Official Receiver?

Mr. Pollock:—No. In a sense we are all claimants.

Mr. Pollock continued his opening at length and the case was adjourned.

ALLEGED LARCENY OF TOBACCOS

C. H. Kane, shipping clerk, and Ho Kwai, tallyman, were arraigned on charges of stealing 100 cases of "Egyptian Delight" tobacco valued at \$750; four cases of "Three Castle" cigarettes valued at \$1,700; and one case of "Pirate" cigarettes valued at \$175, the property of the British American Tobacco Co.

Mr. M. J. D. Stephens prosecuted, Mr. J. H. Gardiner (of Mr. O. D. Thomson's office) appeared for the first defendant, Mr. R. Harding for the second defendant, while Mr. P. W. Goldring (of Messrs. Goldring and Barlow) watched the proceedings on behalf of others concerned.

Mr. A. Harrison, manager of the Hongkong branch of the British American Tobacco Co., stated that the Company has a godown at No. 6 Cross Lane, Waichai. The keeper of this godown had since absconded. On February 28th witness did not issue any order for four cases of "Three Castle" cigarettes in favour of the B.T.A. The four cases of "Three Castle" cigarettes seized by the police form part of a case of twelve which arrived here two or three years ago. No part of that shipment had been sold and the twelve cases were still intact in the Company's books. Witness handed the first defendant a delivery order for 100 cases of "Egyptian Delight" tobacco on the Hongkong Wharf and Godown Co. and told him to pass such order on the second defendant with instructions to transport the goods to West Point. The first defendant was further instructed to fix a time with the second for the burning of this tobacco, and that he was to remain there until the tobacco was burned. Such brands of tobacco were never sold in South China or the Philippines by the British American Tobacco Co., but were always destroyed. The first defendant returned at 5 p.m. on the evening of the day when such instructions were issued, and said he had seen the tobacco burned, and a bill was duly presented by the second defendant for the cost of petroleum said to have been used in the burning of the tobacco.

After further evidence was heard regarding the brands of exhibits the case was adjourned.

SHIPOWNERS AND CARGO.

THE QUESTION OF RESPONSIBILITY.

In the Tokyo Appeal Court on Feb. 20th was heard an appeal filed by Messrs. Siber Wolff & Co., No. 9 Yamashita-cho, Yokohama, against judgment given by the Yokohama District Court in the civil case of Siber Wolff versus Butler Field and Swire, where the plaintiffs claimed ¥1,500 as damages for short delivery of cargo imported by the vessels of the Ocean Steamship Co., Ltd., and of the China Mutual Steam Navigation Co., of which the defendants are the local representatives. The Yokohama District Court dismissed the claim on the ground that inasmuch as the alleged shortage resulted from a theft committed after the cargo was landed in the Customs compound, the defendants were under no obligation to make good the loss, as under British law they are exempt from the liability by virtue of the provision inserted in the bill of lading.

The appellants contended that while they admitted the legality of applying British law in the case, the respondents must be held responsible for the loss of the cargo, even if it resulted from irresistible causes, so long as they failed to take the necessary measures to prevent the loss. The respondents argued that the bill of lading explicitly provided that the cargo should be delivered from on board, and it was also provided that the steamship company should not be held responsible for the loss resulting from theft.

The Appeal Court considered it necessary to submit the question of the British law to an expert, and the services of Professor Matsunami, of the Imperial University, were accordingly secured for the purpose.

The professor gave at a great length his view on the British law on the point. The gist of his evidence was, that the British Courts made it a rule to invalidate the exemption clauses inserted in a bill of lading on the ground that free admission of the exemption of steamship companies from liabilities was detrimental to the public interest. Even if it were explicitly mentioned in the bill of lading that the ship-owners were not responsible for the damage done to or loss of cargo through the negligence of pilots, engineers or others of the crew, the shipowners were held responsible if negligence were proved. Again, in a case of theft the shipowner was not exonerated from the liability if the circumstances attending the theft were not specified. Opinion was divided amongst jurists as to the application of the law to the ship's documents, but the majority of jurists agreed in the opinion that the law of the country where the documents were executed should govern.

Professor Matsunami said that he would put forward his evidence in writing on the action pending in the Court.

The proceedings are being watched with considerable interest in shipping circles.

KULANGSU (AMOY) MUNICIPAL COUNCIL.

Minutes of a meeting of the Municipal Council held at the Board Room, Kulangsu, Amoy, on the 12th February 1907.

Present:—Messrs. W. H. Wallace (Vice-Chairman), A. F. Gardiner, W. Kruse, the Health Officer and the Secretary.

1. The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

2. A letter was read from Mr. Lim Nee Kar with reference to the public road he is anxious to acquire, and the Secretary was directed to inform him that the Council cannot alter the conditions contained in their letter dated 31st ulto.

3. Plans for new Goal, Police Barracks, Municipal Offices and Secretary's house, were submitted by the Secretary, and he was instructed to advertise for estimates for same.

4. The Superintendent of Police reported that the following cases had been dealt with at the Mixed Court since the last meeting:—Summons: Breach of Municipal Regulations 7, kid-napping 1, debt 2. Summary arrest: Rioting 11, assault 1, drunk and incapable 1, Robbery 4, being in possession of stolen property 2, embezzlement 1.

(Signed) W. H. WALLACE,
Vice-Chairman.

THE CANTON-HANKOW RAILWAY.

At a meeting of shareholders of the Canton-Hankow Railway Co. held at the office of the Company in Canton, the matter of advertising was brought forward, and it was pointed out that there were now so many Chinese newspapers that if advertisements concerning the railway were to be inserted in all of them, the expenses would be very heavy. It was therefore proposed and unanimously agreed to insert such advertisements only in a few Chinese papers of respectable standing, which were well known to the fair and just in their reports. The journals selected were the *Tsat Sup Yee Hong Sheung Po* and the *Tsung Sheung In Po* of Canton, as well as the *Chung Ngai San Po* (Chinese Daily Press), of Hongkong. Shareholders are notified to this effect.

COMPANIES.

HONGKONG HOTEL CO., LD.

The annual meeting of shareholders of the Hongkong Hotel Co., Ltd. was held at the Hotel on the 6th March. Dr. J. W. Noble presided and there were also present Hon. Mr. E. Osborne, Messrs. W. H. Potts, (directors), W. A. Cruickshank, A. Ramjahn, E. J. Chapman, D. E. Haskell, E. S. Kadoorie, G. C. C. Master, Ho Fook, Lo Cheung Shiu, and C. Mooney (secretary).

The notice convening the meeting having been read, the CHAIRMAN said:—Gentlemen, we will, with your permission, follow the custom usual in Hongkong and consider the report and accounts as having been read. We regret not being able to lay before you an account showing a much larger net profit than the one under consideration. There is no disguising the fact that our business is not in as flourishing a position as it was several years ago. Our income has been gradually but steadily decreasing month by month in several of our profitable departments, and those interested naturally seek for the cause of the existing conditions as well as the remedy therefor. We consider the falling off in the receipts to be largely, if not wholly, due to the general hard times now ruling, and which all seem to complain of so bitterly. Those on a sterling basis feel the pinch severely and find their monthly stipends materially reduced now that exchange is so high. One hears on all sides of expenses being cut down and of economies which must of necessity be practised to make ends meet, which alone is sufficient to account for the serious falling off in private dinner parties, wines and liquors consumed, extra meals, etc. Some, a considerable number, in fact, attribute this falling off entirely to the closing of the main corridor; be that as it may, the closing was a measure made necessary by the use to which it was put by many who had no interest or connection with the hotel. It had become nothing more or less than a public thoroughfare, and the toilet room situated therein was made use of as public property would be. The passage was made offensive by men in various stages of intoxication, so that it was high time some means should be adopted to break up these objectionable practices and abuses when the Government ordered that the corridor be closed. The result has been satisfactory and pleasing. With your directors it is a constant study how retrenchments may be effected without of course sacrificing efficiency or interfering with the comfort of the guests of the hotel. We cannot increase the prices for board and lodging paid by our regular monthly residents, even though we know these prices to be less in many instances than those charged by private hotels and boarding houses in the Colony. We are pleased to have them with us, though they are not a source of much, if any, profit. We are always glad to welcome any hints or suggestions shareholders may feel disposed to make with reference to improvements or policy in the management of the hotel, but, like most shareholders, you do not take enough interest in your property or its management to even attend these meetings unless the dividend is a bad one; then you roll up in numbers to fight for more. I will mention just here that some of your shareholders have recently made a suggestion as to how your dividends might be increased and your business greatly improved. Mr. Ramjahn has come forward with an offer to lease your hotel for a period of ten years on certain terms and conditions. He has not, however, been able to convince us that his offer is good enough for us to recommend it to you for acceptance. We have given it the careful consideration an offer of this character demands; we have gone into figures very carefully and exhaustively and although Mr. Ramjahn assures us that he is confident that under his management the property would improve greatly and the hotel become more popular and be more thoroughly appreciated by the general public than it is at present, and at the same time enable us to pay larger dividends, as well as leave a large margin of profit for himself, a study of our figures for the past five years has led us to conclude it would be unwise to accept this offer.

Trade is greatly depressed and times are hard, it is true, but it is also true nevertheless that the dividend we are to-day asking you to sanction is at the rate of 20 per cent. per annum—just bear that in mind. We hope and trust times will not always be bad and with the return of general prosperity our turnover will be larger and our profits once more return to their old level. Some of your directors have served you long and faithfully, coming to your assistance at a time when your Company was on the very verge of bankruptcy, and the stock selling as low as \$8 per share. They have by devotion to your interests rescued your property, shown you some very handsome balance sheets added to your assets large and valuable buildings, made many improvements and earned for the Hotel a goodwill which in itself is a valuable asset. Gentlemen, be careful how you make radical changes. Business moves in cycles, and the hotel business is no exception. Your Board is not of the usual type, meeting weekly or monthly for half an hour or so. All our members are in reality managing directors, meeting daily for the transaction of business, and weekly have long sittings of never less than two and a half hours duration, whilst once each week all the buildings are thoroughly inspected by one of the Board in company with the Manager and his assistants. This is a long and tiresome amusement for a Saturday afternoon. The Board generally tiffin in the hotel so as to be able to judge of the quality of the food, the style and manner of the service, the conduct of the dining room, and to test the merits of the numerous servants. A different set or "gang" serve the Directors each week, that their efficiency may be gauged. We would be glad to escape this duty and many others if the hotel could only be run without so much personal supervision and such constant and persistent detail, with the system of which none of you can be fully cognisant. Having been a member of the Board but a few months I can speak with perfect freedom and I make no reference to myself when I say your Board has been, and is, a very hardworking, painstaking, conscientious body, deserving of your greatest praise for what it has done for your Company. When I joined the Board a few months ago, I was amazed to find such a perfect system of accounts relating to all departments, such a mass of details, and the thorough grasp of the situation by the Board. I am telling you of these things because no one else can, and you ought to know them. Our fees appear in the accounts; that our tiffin is not charged for is true, it being one of the duties of the members of the Board to eat it whether they relish it or not. Now then, if it is your desire to enter into new arrangements as to future management, either to lease the hotel or elect a new board of your own choice, we are ready to resign our positions, individually or collectively, here and now, so do not allow your bashfulness to deter you. You have but to express your wishes for us to act.

Since the above has been written, a letter has been received from Mr. Ramjahn withdrawing permanently his offer to lease the hotel. Some days ago he wrote reducing the offer, which he now withdraws, with these words:—"In consequence of the great length of time your Company is taking to consider my proposal, and since the accounts for the second half of last year's working have been published, I beg with much regret to withdraw my offer for the lease of the Hongkong Hotel Buildings, etc., for the present." The first letter received was dated Jan. 9, 1907. We concluded, however, not to alter what had been already written, that you might have some knowledge of what had transpired. Before proposing the adoption of the report and accounts, I will be pleased to answer any question you would like to ask. I would also like to say that the typhoon of September last damaged our property to the extent of about \$6,000.

Mr. RAMJAHN—I think it is right of me to ask you to read the remaining portion of my letter; you have only read a portion of it. I think it will be beneficial to the interests of the company and in justification of myself if you read it all.

The CHAIRMAN—I read only that portion because I thought it was the only part which bore on the subject we were discussing. If you

wish me to read it I have no objection. I will read the whole correspondence if you like.

Mr. RUMJAHN—I leave it entirely in your hands.

Mr. HUTCHIN POTS—I would read the whole of the correspondence.

Mr. OSBORNE—Read the letter.

The Chairman then read the letter as follows:—

The Secretary, Hongkong Hotel Co., Ltd.

Sir,—In consequence of the great length of time your Company is taking to consider my proposal, and since the accounts for the second half of last year's working have been published, I beg with much regret to withdraw my offer for the lease of the Hongkong Hotel's buildings, etc., for the present. As the chance for my renewing the offer is rather remote at the present moment, and as I am holding a few hundred shares, although a small quantity having only been registered in my name, I shall be very pleased for the interests of the Company generally and the public in particular to give my views, and to discuss them privately with your Directors, as to some important improvements which seem to me essential for the welfare of the Company. It must be understood, however, that the motive which has prompted me to make the proposal for a lease, or my request for a private discussion for improvements, does not rest at the least upon the management of the Company; on the contrary, it must be admitted that the Board of Directors, under the circumstances, have been very untiring in their efforts to promote the interests of the Company. Amongst a few other improvements appearing to me greatly beneficial to the Company is a change in the present system of running the bars, which are not yet even provided with well-known brands of wines to be obtained locally. The policy carried on by your Company to push on the Company's own particular brands, such as "Hongkong Hotel's Special" and "Special that" or "Wines specially Bottled for the Hongkong Hotel" is a good one in the absence of keen competition; but when it is remembered that rival establishments are stocking wines that commend themselves to the palate of a cosmopolitan community, it is but natural that the members of the community give preference to a place where drinks accustomed to their palate are obtainable. It is hard to reconcile the fact that your bars are not even provided with the most well known and the only genuine Italian Vermouth (Martini and Rossi). By introducing well known brands of wines, not only would the Company profit handsomely, for at least double the cost would be realized, but adequate requirements for the public demand could then be said to be provided for, without which competition, even if established immediately next door to your Company's building, would be justified.—Yours, etc.

ARMAT RUMJAHN.

Hongkong, 4th March, 1907.

Mr. RUMJAHN—I would like to ask one or two questions. Are the Hotel Mansions leased out for a number of years, for how much, and for how long?

The CHAIRMAN—If you had given notice of these questions I would have had the figures prepared.

Mr. RUMJAHN—I think it is mentioned in the accounts as \$21,000; that is for six months—\$3,500 per month.

The CHAIRMAN—That is correct.

Mr. RUMJAHN—Are you aware that the lessee is making between \$1,000 and \$1,500 per month on the lease?

The CHAIRMAN—Well?

Mr. RUMJAHN—Are the directors aware of it?

The CHAIRMAN—We are.

Mr. RUMJAHN—Were the shareholders consulted when the premises were leased? Was the offer submitted to the shareholders?

The CHAIRMAN—Is it customary to submit offers to the shareholders before doing business? Remember these buildings were leased before they were built.

Mr. RUMJAHN—Before they were built?

The CHAIRMAN—While they were building. They were leased before the building was started; otherwise the building would not have been begun. It was a speculation on the part of the man to lease them—a speculation which the directors and the shareholders were not

willing to undertake. Now that the speculation has proved successful we ought to congratulate him rather than not; we did not want to see him lose money.

Mr. RUMJAHN—It occurred to me strange that a Company having three directors should prefer to lease out the building, to a private individual to make money, when it could have been kept by ourselves.

The CHAIRMAN—What point are you trying to make?

Mr. RUMJAHN—If it had not been leased, additional receipts amounting to \$20,000 would be got.

Mr. OSBORNE—It would never have been built.

Mr. RUMJAHN—The Company has leased the building to the lessee who makes \$20,000—

The CHAIRMAN—\$12,000 I understand. I heard it outside, and so did you. I have already told you that if the lease had not been accepted the building would not have been erected. In addition, the rental is on a sliding scale, so that in a few years we shall be getting more than we are now. I think you pointed that out in one of your letters, so that you must be fully cognisant of it.

Mr. RUMJAHN—I do not think so.

Mr. MASTER—I presume the new building returns a fair rent—?

The CHAIRMAN—Yes.

Mr. OSBORNE—We get a good return.

Mr. RUMJAHN—I have worked it out. We get six per cent on the outlay, and if the reclamation had been sold, as I understand there was a good offer \$10 per foot—we would have done better.

The CHAIRMAN—In one of your letters you say "The Company will receive from the Hotel Mansions \$8,000 per annum." That referred to the sliding scale. What is your point?

Mr. RUMJAHN—I want to know how long the lease is for.

The CHAIRMAN—Ten years.

Referring to the letter from Mr. Rumjahn the CHAIRMAN remarked that when a demand was created for anything the hotel did not stock, they would lose no time in getting it.

Mr. RUMJAHN—You say as soon as a demand is created—

The CHAIRMAN—We will buy your liquors or anyone else's.

Mr. RUMJAHN—If you do not stock them customers cannot see them.

Mr. MASTER—Customers will ask for what they want. Mr. Rumjahn wants his own liquors to be bought by the Hotel.

Mr. RUMJAHN—The company is, I understand, pushing its own particular brands.

The CHAIRMAN—That is Mr. Rumjahn's policy as well.

There being no further questions, the CHAIRMAN moved the adoption of the report and accounts.

Mr. CRUICKSHANK in seconding the motion expressed, on behalf of the other shareholders, the gratitude they felt towards the directors for their arduous labours. With regard to Mr. Rumjahn's complaint, Mr. Cruickshank said that he was not a drinking man, and he had never heard any complaints outside.

The motion was carried.

Mr. Ho Fook proposed, and Mr. MASTER seconded, that Dr. Noble be re-elected to the Board of Directors. Carried.

The CHAIRMAN—That is all the business, gentlemen. Thank you very much for your attendance. If there is anything we can do to improve the condition of the hotel, be sure we shall do it, and any suggestions any one is pleased to make, by Mr. Rumjahn or others, we will be very pleased to hear them and thank you.

Mr. MASTER—Speaking for myself, I have the greatest confidence in the directors. I feel they take a great deal of trouble—more than they are expected to—in coming here and going round the hotel. I have always been satisfied with the Hongkong Hotel, and know that the directors have given much of their time and attention to its working. Mr. Osborne has been constantly in attendance.

The CHAIRMAN—He certainly has. And he has been very ably assisted by Mr. Parfitt.

Mr. MASTER—I think it is a very great mistake to blame the directors because there has been a slight depression, and we only ask them to go on as they have been doing.

The CHAIRMAN—Thanks, Mr. Master, for your remarks; and also Mr. Cruickshank.

Mr. RUMJAHN—I think there is a misunderstanding regarding my attitude towards the directors. I think from my letters it will be clearly seen that I said the directors have been very untiring in their efforts to do everything in their power for the benefit of the company. I have taken a great deal of trouble to find out the working of this company for some time past, and I must say the directors have been very assiduous and painstaking in safeguarding the interests of the company. But I must say there is room for improvement. There is no system which is perfect in every way. We are moving on with the times, and I think that with some improvements in the management of this company it could be gradually improved for the benefit of the company generally.

The CHAIRMAN—Thank you. Dividend warrants are ready.

Mr. CRUICKSHANK—Ask Mr. Rumjahn if he ever kept a hotel.

Mr. RUMJAHN—I am keeping a private one.

Mr. CRUICKSHANK—Do you think you have had such special experience that you could run this gigantic concern better than it has been done?

Mr. RUMJAHN: That is my opinion.

The CHAIRMAN: Dividend warrants can be obtained by applying at the secretary's office.

There being no further discussion the Chairman declared the meeting closed, adding that dividend warrants were ready.

THE NATIONAL BANK OF CHINA LTD.

An extraordinary general meeting of shareholders was held in the National Bank of China, Ltd., on the 6th March, for the purpose of considering the following resolution:—"That the Articles of Association be altered by striking out the word "three" in Article 111, and by substituting therefor the word "two" and by striking out the words "each of whom shall be permanently resident in or near the Colony of Hongkong" in the same Article and also by striking out the words "each of whom must be permanently resident in Great Britain" in Article 115.

There were present Messrs. C. Ewen (Chairman), J. Scott Harston (Director), G. C. Moxon (Managing Director), P. Loureiro, J. E. Joseph, E. S. Kadoorie, Ellis Kadoorie, E. D. Haskell, E. Howard, Chan Ki-pau, Yeung Pak-leung, P. C. Potts and E. W. Terry.

After the Managing Director had read the notice convening the meeting, the CHAIRMAN moved and Mr. Ellis Kadoorie seconded that the resolution contained in the notice which had been read to the meeting be adopted, and the resolution having been voted upon by a show of hands, the Chairman declared it to be carried unanimously.

The CHAIRMAN then thanked those present for their attendance and declared the meeting ended.

CHINA FIRE INSURANCE CO., LTD.

The 28th ordinary meeting of shareholders in the above Company was held at the offices, on March 8th. Mr. A. Haupt (Chairman of board of directors) presided, and there were present Messrs. N. A. Siebe, A. G. Wood, E. Goets D.M. Nissim, G. Balloob, R. Shewan (directors), G. L. Tomlin (secretary), R. E. Barretto, J. J. Leiria, A. H. M. da Silva, Captain Roach W. L. Pattenden, F. Ellis, J. Orange, F. Smyth, W. H. Wickham and Chan Pat.

The SECRETARY having read the notice convening the meeting.

The CHAIRMAN said—Gentlemen, the Directors' Report and Statement of Accounts for the past year having been in your hands for about a fortnight, I will now, with your permission, adopt the usual course and consider them as read. It affords us much pleasure to be in the happy position to come before you with such favourable results for the year 1906, when a record profit was made by the Company. This enables us to recommend to you \$6.00 Dividend and \$2.00 Bonus, or say 40 per cent on the paid up capital. This is the highest dividend paid in any one year and must be looked upon as exceptional, and cannot be

expected every year, but only when the Company is favoured with good fortune; \$5,000 to be added to the Investment Fluctuation Account to provide for a temporary depreciation in certain Companies' shares at the end of the year, but which have since materially increased in value. This account only shows a credit of \$346.05 owing to something over \$7,000 having been written off securities and loss in Exchange on a Sterling Bank Deposit, \$9,961.63 to be added to Extra Reserve Fund account, which will then stand at \$320,112.05, which is a satisfactory addition to our Reserves; \$5,469.42 bonus to Office Staff, which will no doubt have your approval. Turning to the Working Account 1906, I am pleased to be able to point out an increase of \$18,831.67 over that carried forward for the year 1905, which must be considered satisfactory. The Company's Surveyors have reported on the properties under Mortgage to us, and we are satisfied that we have ample security in each case. We have opened an Agency at Newchwang, and trust to work that District successfully. I am sorry to tell you that since the New Year has opened we have been involved in a somewhat serious loss by a conflagration at Bangkok. Before moving the adoption of the Directors' Report and Statement of Accounts for the year 1906, I shall be happy to answer any questions that may be put relating to the business before the meeting.

There being no questions, the report was adopted, on the motion of the CHAIRMAN seconded by Mr. ORANGE.

The appointments of Messrs. D. M. Nissim, G. Balloch and R. Shewan to vacancies on the directorate were confirmed on the motion of Mr. SMYTH, seconded by Mr. PATTENDEN.

Mr. LEIRIA proposed and Captain Roach seconded the re-election of Messrs. A. G. Wood and E. Goetz as directors. Carried.

Mr. da SILVA proposed and Mr. Barretto seconded the re-appointment of Messrs. W. Hutton Potts and A. R. Lowe as auditors, which was approved.

The CHAIRMAN—That is all the business gentlemen. Thank you for your attendance. Dividend warrants will be posted this afternoon.

THE HONGKONG FIRE INSURANCE CO., LD.

The thirty-eighth ordinary meeting of shareholders in the Hongkong Fire Insurance Co., Ltd. was held at the office of the Company, Messrs Jardine, Matheson and Co., on the 7th March. Hon. Mr. W. J. Gresson presided, others present being Sir Paul Chater and Messrs. H. P. White, F. Maitland and A. J. Raymond (consulting committee), L. N. Leefe (secretary), C. H. Rogge, J. Barton, W. A. Cruickshank, J. Orange, Ho Fook, A. H. M. da Silva, H. Percy Smith, W. H. Wickham, R. E. Barretto and Captain W. E. Clarke.

The SECRETARY read the notice convening the meeting.

The CHAIRMAN said: Gentlemen, the report and accounts have been in your hands for some days, and I will therefore, with your permission, follow the usual course and take them as read. The business of the year 1905 has closed with results which the consulting committee, and I think you also, will regard as gratifying, the profit for the year being the largest in the records of the Company. (Applause). The premium income shows an increase of \$27,793.28 as compared with the preceding year, and this increase has been secured without in any way departing from the lines we have consistently followed, and which we believe are essential to the continued prosperity of the Company; our policy being, so far as possible, to confine our acceptances to those classes of risks which, though lower rated, have been proved on a long experience to yield the most profitable results. The difficulties of pursuing this policy have not been diminished by the ever-increasing competition to secure business, and whilst we naturally expect and anticipate having to face competition in our endeavours to retain our position, we have to deplore the lengths to which this tends. In certain areas where we have large connections, and more particularly in the North, the desire to swell premium incomes has resulted in an

exploiting by others of the insurance of Chinese contents, and the granting of policies to undesirable applicants, which unquestionably bears close relationship to the increasing frequency of fires, possibly also involving the property of reputable and desirable insurers, and not infrequently leading to litigation serving to bring the business of fire insurance into disrepute. Our losses for the year, you will observe, are unusually low, being only 19.87 per cent of the premium income. Commissions and expenses have remained within the bounds of economy and are below the ratio of most of our competitors, whilst our Interest Account shows a sensible increase. Of course I cannot venture to predict the outcome of the year 1906, but we view with satisfaction the fact that, up to date, the result is even better than for the corresponding period of 1905 business. I do not think that our Assets and Liabilities call for any detailed remarks on my part. Your attention has been directed in the report to the compulsory deposit we have in Japan to enable us to transact business in that country. The bonds which form this deposit stand in Japan to day at a figure slightly in excess of that at which they were originally purchased but, owing to the fluctuation of exchange, their dollar equivalent was somewhat below their book value. This we have now provided for and a further rise in exchange would not call for any immediate further revision. Provision has also been made in the accounts and \$2,250 set aside as a bonus for distribution among the staff (Applause). The Reserve fund we propose to increase by \$35,555.55, the largest sum that our Articles of Association permit of our appropriating in this manner. There remains a sum of \$320,000 to be dealt with and with this we propose to pay a dividend of \$40 a share. If any further information is desired I shall be pleased to give it before moving the resolution that the report and accounts as presented be passed.

No further information was sought, so the CHAIRMAN proposed the adoption of the report and accounts as presented.

Mr. BARTON seconded and the motion was agreed to.

It was proposed by Mr. ORANGE, seconded by Captain CLARKE and agreed that Sir Paul Chater, and Messrs. H. P. White, F. Maitland and A. J. Raymond should be re-elected to the consulting committee.

Mr. ROGGE moved that Messrs. W. Hutton Potts and H. Percy Smith, F.C.A. be re-appointed auditors.

Mr. Ho Fook seconded and the motion was carried.

The CHAIRMAN: Dividend warrants, gentlemen, will be ready on application to-morrow morning. Thank you for your attendance.

ANGLO-GERMAN BREWERY CO., LD.

At the third annual general meeting of the Company, held at Shanghai on Feb. 26th, Mr. A. McLeod (Chairman) said:—The report and accounts for the past year have been in your hands for some days and you will no doubt agree to take them as read. Before asking you to pass them I shall be pleased to make a few remarks in reference to the working of the Company during the twelve months ending December 31, 1906. It will, I hope, be considered satisfactory that the sales of our beer show a considerable increase on those of the previous year and that there have been no complaints about its quality, even in the hottest summer months, when beer is so apt to deteriorate. This is evidence that the new brewing master has fully justified the confidence that the Directors and managers placed in him when engaging his services. Encouraged by the success which the brew of Tsingtao dark beer, under the name of Beck Beer, met with when placed on the market in 1906, the Company continued this special brew, which has been so eagerly purchased by consumers that it has been at times difficult to keep up with the demand. The excellence of the Company's beer has been officially recognized at the Munich Brewery Exhibition held last year, where the Company received the highest prize awarded, namely the gold medal and diploma. The popularity of the Germania Brewery's vari-

ous descriptions of beer is now assured in all markets in China and Siberia. The new cellars have been completed and it is hoped that the necessary extension of the refrigerating plant will be ready for use at the beginning of the summer. One half of the cellars have been stocked with additional rats, so that the Company is now in a position to cope with a much larger demand than was formerly the case. As stated in last year's report, the Victoria Brewery, owing to the high cost of cold storage, coupled with the fact that the plant was a very primitive one, has been for some time a success and has had to be liquidated. The account has now been closed, resulting unfortunately in a final loss of \$12,201.49. The Directors were only able to dispose of the machinery and plant that would not be utilized at the Germania Brewery, Tsingtao, for a nominal sum, and as payment of a heavy allowance had to be made to the Shanghai Ice Company for cancelling the lease of their cold storage accommodation, the loss upon this unfortunate venture has been very considerable. The Directors have, however, thought it desirable to meet the loss at once and you will notice from the Report that it is recommended that the entire amount should be written off out of this year's earnings. It is much to be regretted that the shareholders and the public have not responded more liberally to the endeavour of the Directors to place the additional one thousand shares authorized to be issued at the last annual meeting. They do not, however, attribute this result to any want of confidence in the undertaking, but rather to the position of the share market generally during the last year, when owing to the abnormally high rates of exchange ruling, investors have preferred to place money in gold rather than in silver securities. You will observe from the accounts now presented that, including \$1,066.95 brought forward from 1905 account, the Profit and Loss Account shows a credit balance of \$50,423.41, or just about twelve per cent on the capital of the Company, and had it not been for the loss upon the liquidation of the Victoria Brewery, to which allusion has already been made, an increased dividend would have been possible. The Directors now recommend that the available balance of \$50,423.41 should be appropriated as follows:—Write off machinery and casks, \$7,000 total loss on Victoria Brewery to be written off, \$12,201.49; to pay a dividend of 7 per cent to shareholders, \$30,315.25; and to carry forward to 1907 account \$908.67.

LAOU KUNG MOW COTTON SPINNING CO., LD.

The thirteenth ordinary meeting of this company was held at Shanghai on Feb. 26th. Mr. E. C. Pearce (Chairman) said:—The business which we have before us this afternoon is the passing of the report and accounts for the year terminating December 31, 1906. The report and accounts have been in your hands for some days and with your permission we will accept them as read. In moving their adoption I am pleased to say that the result has borne out the prognostications set forth by my predecessor in the chair; although perhaps not quite as satisfactorily as for the year 1905, they fully enable your Board to recommend a dividend of Tls. 800 per share, to write off for depreciation Tls. 51,384.48, and to carry forward to next year's account Tls. 31,469.74. With regard to the sum apportioned to depreciation, your Board have followed the policy of former years and it must be considered very satisfactory that out of our actual earnings we have been enabled fully to depreciate from the commencement of operations in 1898, in accordance with the recognized home standard, viz., 2½ per cent per annum on mill buildings, 5 per cent per annum on machinery and 5 per cent on our Chinese house. Reservoir land and improvements, including the proposed amount to be written off for 1906, will have been written down from Tls. 37,889.86 to Tls. 9,500, while furniture account has been depreciated to below half its original cost. This policy of depreciation must commend itself to all shareholders as placing the business on a thoroughly sound basis. Turning to the accounts our debit for interest is about the same; it is credited with rents from our Chinese houses

which have brought in about Tls. 1,000 more than last year. Repair and renewals cost Tls. 5,956.60. Your plant is in excellent working order, every machine during the year having been thoroughly overhauled. Spinning account is not so satisfactory as last year, but is accounted for by the heavy fall in the price of yarn which occurred during the latter portion of the year, while the price of cotton showed but little variation throughout the period covered by the report. The overdraft with our bankers has been reduced from Tls. 238,000 to Tls. 165,000. It is difficult to forecast what the result of this year's working will be, but the outlook for the immediate future is certainly not so bright as this time last year. We are carrying forward rather a larger stock of yarn than is usual, but clearances during the last quarter were far from satisfactory, the trade generally having suffered in this respect, which is borne out by the fact that our Chamber of Commerce at the end of the year returned a stock of local spun yarn of about 68,000 bales which, roughly speaking, represents no less an amount than about five and a-half million taels in value. Before moving the resolution to pass the report and accounts I shall be glad to answer to the best of my ability any questions that any shareholders may care to ask.

There being no questions the following resolutions were put to the meeting and carried unanimously:—

Proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Mr. Young: that the report and accounts as presented be passed.

Proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Mr. Michelan: that a dividend of Tls. 8 per share be declared for the year ending December 31, 1906.

Proposed by Mr. Clark, seconded by Mr. Mr. Murphine: that Messrs. Young and Chung Liang yu be reappointed directors of the company.

Proposed by Mr. Mosser, seconded by Mr. Rosenfeld; that Mr. G. R. Wingrove be re-elected the company's auditor for the current year.

Proposed by the Chairman (who explained that it was a necessary formality), seconded by Mr. Young: that the next general meeting be held during either the month of February or March 1907.

The Chairman—Before adjourning the meeting, gentlemen, I have to inform you that the Board, in view of the steady advance in the market value of your shares, decided early in the year to offer to shareholders the balance of our unissued capital, viz., 842 shares at par in proportion of one share in every nine as held by shareholders on March 1, March 31 being allowed to shareholders resident in Europe or America. The Board have every hope that this extra capital viz., Tls. 84,200 will be taken up, which will place the company on a thoroughly sound working basis and enable us, I hope, considerably to reduce our usual charge for interest. With these few remarks, gentlemen, I have to thank you for your attendance here this afternoon and in closing have to inform you that dividend warrants will be posted at once.

The meeting terminated with a vote of thanks to the Chairman, proposed by Mr. Clark.

THE SHANGHAI GAS CO., LTD.

ANNUAL MEETING.

The annual general meeting of shareholders in this company was held at Shanghai on Feb. 28th. Mr. E. Jenner Hogg (Chairman) said: The report and accounts which have been in your hands for some time will, with your permission, be taken as read, and I think you cannot fail to find them satisfactory, since, in the face of dear coal, they show such excellent results of the year's working. Our gas consumption has increased as much as could be expected, and an excellent feature is the good and growing development of our by-products in the shape of tar, pitch, and sulphate of ammonia, for which we have found a ready market and we have every reason to hope for a steady increase in this branch of our business. You will notice that working account shows our total receipts to be Tls. 631,999.69, an increase of Tls. 92,347.10 or nearly 17½ per cent—the gas sales having

produced Tls. 511,940.79, an increase of just over 14 per cent. The residuals have brought in the handsome total of Tls. 100,585.44, against Tls. 61,845.05, or about 62 per cent increase. On the other side of the account our total expenditure has been Tls. 446,242.27 against Tls. 318,008.17, an increase for which carbonizing material is chiefly responsible. We have carbonized some 4,000 tons more material and we had to pay a much higher price for it than during the previous year. As regards the other items, I need merely say that they have only increased as necessitated by our growing business. Profit and Loss Account you will find charged with the depreciation appropriations of last year—the Tls. 24,000 there passed to renewals and depreciation account, the bonus to staff, and other items—all duly explained in the account. On the other side of the account there will be found a credit of Tls. 6,035.14 for interest, it is the balance after paying interest on overdraft, and crediting interest on plant, buildings in course of erection, fittings and stocks. Exchange account shows Tls. 4,127.87 in our favour. When referring to the appropriation to renewals and depreciation account last year, I informed you that it was done with the full intention of drawing upon it this year towards some heavy prospective additions and extensions. We have only needed to trench upon this account to the extent of Tls. 65,000, leaving Tls. 100,000 for future similar needs. Turning to the balance sheet, the expenditure of Tls. 74,416.80 is mostly for the cost of new offices and godowns, and Tls. 15,000 of this we have charged to renewals and depreciation account. On manufacturing plant Tls. 17,138.24 was expended. On this account we have thought it expedient also to make an appropriation from renewals and depreciation account of Tls. 50,000, so that the total cost in the balance sheet now stands at Tls. 32,861.76 less than last year. As you would anticipate from what I said at our last annual meeting, we have some extensive works in course of construction, against which we have paid the large sum of Tls. 336,466.38 as debited in the account and which will be transferred to manufacturing plant during this year. We have added considerable facilities for distributing at a cost of Tls. 91,188.38. Furniture account shows a larger expenditure than usual, owing to additional furniture that has been needed for our new offices. On the other side of the account you will find capital account increased from Tls. 800,000 to Tls. 1,197,700—brought up to that figure by the issue of 7,954 shares last November—the premium of Tls. 30 per share being added to "premium account." The other items need no comment. So much for the working of a somewhat difficult year. As to the future I think we may look forward with every confidence. We have continued to provide—and we must go on providing—for the business which is ever increasing and the larger supply of gas which we have every reason to believe the public needs will demand from us more and more, especially as it becomes fully recognized that gas offers such great advantages for power and heating. Although we have extended in these directions here, we have made nothing like the strides that have been made elsewhere. It is no longer a question of the advantages of gas for small power installations only. Installations for anything up to 2,000 horse power are now in vogue and prove economic successes, while for heating and cooking, the facility, economy and cleanliness to be obtained from gas cannot fail to be more practically appreciated. As to ordinary lighting, improvements continue, and you are doubtless aware how gas is more than holding its own, often replacing the rival illuminant by reason of its economy and other advantages. The subject of incandescent mantles is receiving much scientific attention at home and more durable mantles are being obtained. A new process has produced a mantle which receives the following testimony from an independent quarter—"One thing is quite clear, and that is that the incandescent gas industry has secured another victory and scored another triumph, since the only serious drawback to incandescent gas lighting—the fragility of the mantle—has been finally overcome." If we find these mantles as described, we

shall lose no time in offering them to consumers here, I should like to take this opportunity of appealing to consumers to assist our staff to ensure efficient lighting. We are only too anxious to correct any failings when they occur. What I want to ask is that prompt notice may be given when lights burn badly, or anything is wrong, so that the remedy may be applied without delay. As an interesting indication of the growth of our business I may mention that on last Chinese New Year's eve we delivered 2,714,500 cub. ft. of gas—some 600,000 feet more than on the corresponding night in 1906; and going back to 1903, the delivery was then 1,075,000 cub. ft. These are figures that speak well for our progress. I regret to say that the laying of the tramway has caused some trouble and a tendency to friction that we have done our best to avoid. We have done what we could by drawing the attention of the Municipal Council to the difficulties and probable danger to the public, and hindrances to this company's future work, and have been ready to do our share towards formulating equitable arrangements. So far we have been met in a somewhat uncompromising spirit, but we hope that timely measures may yet be taken to safeguard the public from future dangers and inconvenience and that the Council will extend the protection and assistance that they alone can afford to the legitimate position of this company, which, as caterer of light to the community, is so inseparably bound up with the public interests. Before concluding, I wish to bear testimony to the good work done by our staff during the year, which I am sure will meet with your cordial appreciation.

There being no questions the following resolutions were put to the meeting and adopted without comment:—

Proposed by Mr. E. Jenner Hogg and seconded by Mr. J. M. Young:—That the report and accounts as presented be accepted and passed.

Proposed by Mr. E. Jenner Hogg and seconded by Mr. F. Aycoough: That a final dividend for the year ended December 31st, 1906, be paid to the shareholders at the rate of three taels and five mace (Tls. 3.50) per share on old shares and one tael, one mace and five candareens per share on the new shares issued on November 1st, 1906.

Proposed by Mr. E. Jenner Hogg and seconded by Mr. P. F. Lavers:—That a bonus for the year 1906 be paid to the shareholders at the rate of one tael and five mace (Tls. 1.50) per share on old shares and two mace and five candareens (Tls. 0.25) per share on the new shares issued on 1st November, 1906.

Proposed by Mr. E. Jenner Hogg and seconded by Mr. P. F. Lavers:—That the balance at the credit of profit and loss account remaining after payment of the dividend and bonus on shares declared at this meeting be appropriated as recommended by the directors in their report for the year 1906.

Proposed by Mr. J. Johnstone and seconded by Mr. E. E. Parsons:—That Mr. F. Aycoough be re-elected as a Director of this company.

Proposed by Mr. E. H. Hutchison and seconded by Mr. N. E. Bryant:—That Mr. W. H. Anderson be re-elected as auditor of this company.

THE CHINA MERCHANTS' COMPANY.

A special meeting of shareholders in the China Merchants' Steam Navigation Co. was held at the Yuyuen Gardens Shanghai, on Feb. 28th to elect special representatives of the company who shall have the power of registering it as a commercial concern in the Ministry of Agriculture, Works and Commerce. There were present 198 shareholders, representing 202,816 shares, or a little over one-half of the total number. The Chairman of the meeting was Mr. Shen Tun-ho, one of the Directors of the Imperial Bank of China, and the proposal to elect special representatives to register the company in Peking was unanimously agreed to by those present. The following five gentlemen were elected: H. E. Shen Kung-pao; Taotai Shen Tun-ho, Taotai Chou Chin-chen, Chairman of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Director of the Chinese Telegraph Company; Taotai Wang Sze-chen, Director of the Imperial Bank of China, and Taotai Yu Ya-ching, compradore of the Netherlands Bank. There is also to

be a meeting of shareholders residing in Canton for the same purpose and the gentlemen elected in the South will form with those elected in Shanghai (representing the Northern and Central provinces) the Committee of the China Merchants' Co., who shall register it as a commercial concern in the proper department in Peking, according to the new regulations promulgated by the Central Government.—N.C. Daily News

CANTON.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

March, 1st.

WELL-EARNED FURLOUGH.

It is reported that Mr. F. J. Mayers Commissioner of I. M. Customs, is going home on leave. Mr. Paul King is to succeed him here. Mr. Mayers will be greatly missed, as he has been a very popular Commissioner both with Foreigners and Chinese. The Commissioner paid a farewell call on Viceroy Chou Fu a few days ago, and the latter entertained him at a special banquet yesterday, Lo Taotai being also present. I understand that several prominent members of the Customs staff have been recommended to the Throne by the Viceroy, at Mr. Mayers' request, for distinction.

LAUNCHES IN TROUBLE.

One of the I. M. Customs regulations is that no Government launches are permitted to tow any vessels without first having obtained permission from the Customs. A few days ago two Government launches, the *Ting Kung* and *Loi On*, were seen towing flower boats. A Customs official informed the Commissioner of the matter and he reported the case to the Viceroy.

OLD CUSTOM ABOLISHED.

The usual official custom is that all subordinate civil officials in the Kwangtung Province have to call personally on the Viceroy during the first moon of the year to offer their New Year congratulations. His Excellency Viceroy Chou Fu has telegraphed to all the officials in the interior informing them not to come to perform this unnecessary etiquette.

TOKYO EXPOSITION.

The Kwangtung Agricultural Bureau has submitted to the Viceroy the names of the deputies whom they intend to delegate to the Tokyo Exhibition as representatives of the Provincial Government.

NEW TELEGRAPH STATION.

Hitherto all telegrams sent from the admiralty yamen and the ports at Boca Tigris to Canton are first transmitted to the Chinese Imperial Telegraph office at Hongkong and thence back to Canton. At Acting-Ammiral Li Tsung's suggestion, the Minister of Telegraphs at Peking has instructed the Viceroy to establish a new telegraph station for the sole purpose of sending official messages direct to Canton and to let the old station remain as it is for commercial purposes.

March 3rd.

OFFICIAL APPOINTMENT.

Local authorities received cablegrams from Peking stating that Fu Ching (Manchu) has been appointed Lieutenant General of the Manchu Army of Kwangtung. He is expected to arrive here in a fortnight. There have always been two Lieutenant-Generals in the Manchu Army here.

KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY SHARES.

Taotai Wen Cho-Tsoi, Director of the Chinese Imperial Telegraph Office in Hongkong, has been authorized by His Excellency Chou Fu to invite the Chinese merchants in Hongkong to subscribe for shares of the Kowloon-Canton Railway Company. Wen Taotai left for your port yesterday.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS.

I reported to you in a previous letter that the local engineer, Chan Lun Tai, who contracted with the Chinese Government for the reclamation of the Ho Pak new bund had failed to carry out his contract in a satisfactory manner in consequence of which failure the authorities

seized all his properties. The contractor was afterwards arrested and imprisoned. It is now reported that after investigation of the accounts it was discovered that a sum of over \$200,000 had been paid to the contractor for work which was badly done and not in accordance with the specifications attached to the contract. The Government has terminated the contract and will imprison the contractor until the amount is paid up. Owing to this, the reclamation work was stopped. It is said that a foreign Consul-General here recommended Messrs. Purnell and Paget to the Chinese Government to take up the contract and complete the work. Mr. W. Dauby, who is reported to have obtained the contract for the building of the bridge here, will probably succeed in obtaining the contract for the reclamation of the Honam bund, which is also a gigantic piece of work. The Chinese people here are pleased to hear that these large contracts will all be in the hands of European architects and trust that sound material and good workmanship will result. Completion at an early date is anticipated.

CHINA QUARTERLY TRADE RETURNS.

The quarterly returns of trade for the three months ended December 1906 has made its appearance, and as usual the mass of figures is full of interest to such a community as Hongkong. Looking at the details concerning the coast ports, with which Hongkong is in closest touch, we find that Foochow is the first to claim our attention. During the quarter there were entered 84 ocean going steamers of 93,281 tons, 15 sailing vessels of 687 tons, and 21 inland water steamers of 4,151 tons. These were under foreign flags. Under Chinese flags there were 20 ocean going steamers of 16,431 tons, and six inland waters steamers of 396 tons. The total was 145 vessels of 114,944 tons, which compared with the corresponding quarter in 1905 shows a decrease of two vessels and 3070 tons. The vessels cleared during the three months amounted to 141 and the tonnage amounted to 116,273, a decrease of six vessels and 1123 tons compared with the corresponding period in 1905. Dues and duties collected during the quarter amounted to Hk taels 109,595 from foreign flags and Hk taels 57,244 from native flags, which, with transit dues and opium likin, realised a total of Hk taels 227,799, as compared with Hk taels 334,709 for the corresponding quarter of 1905, and Hk taels 278,612 for that of 1904.

At Amoy there were entered under foreign flags, 214 ocean going steamers of 257,476 tons, five sailing vessels of 1,997 tons, and 802 inland waters steamers of 25,477 tons. Under the Chinese flag there were 40 ocean going steamers of 9,734 tons and 346 inland waters steamers of 14,564 tons. The totals were 1,377 vessels of 369,248 tons as against 1,327 vessels of 329,197 during the corresponding quarter of 1905, an increase of fifty vessels but a slight decrease of tonnage. During the three months there were 1,366 vessels of 365,955 tons cleared, an advance on the same quarter of last year of 52 ships but a decrease of 23,002 tons. Dues and duties to the extent of Hk taels 158,086 were collected from foreign flags and Hk taels 3,238 from native flags, a total of Hk taels 252,390, showing advances as compared with the Hk taels 230,530 in 1905 and Hk taels 246,112 in 1904.

At Swatow under foreign flags there entered 288 ocean going steamers of 322,715 tons, one sailing vessel of 1845 tons, and 280 steam launches of 8,344 tons. Under the Chinese flag the numbers entered were, seven ocean going steamers of 7,176 tons and 815 steam launches of 15,274 tons. The totals were 1,371 vessels of 356,354 tons. As the previous statistics do not include the figures relative to steam launches a proper comparison cannot be made. The vessels cleared numbered 1,303, and the tonnage amounted to 357,998. Dues and duties collected during the quarter amounted to Hk taels 324,638 from foreign sources and Hk taels 4,358 from native sources, or including transit dues and opium likin a total of Hk taels 429,133 roughly an increase of taels 30,000 over the figures of 1,905 and taels 36,000 over those of 1,904.

At Canton there were, under foreign flags entered 154 ocean going steamers of 171,411 tons, 333 river steamers of 300,775 tons, nine sailing vessels of 4,629 tons, 19 steam launches of 450 tons and 2,298 inland waters steamers of 36,286 tons. Under the Chinese flag there were entered 23 ocean going steamers of 31,123 tons, 97 river steamers of 20,215 tons, 224 steam launches of 4,294 tons, and 3,702 inland waters steamers of 41,405 tons. The totals were 6,913 vessels of 612,588 tons, a decrease of 555 vessels and 107,245 tons. During the three months there were cleared 6,928 vessels of 619,886 tons a decrease of 495 vessels and 91,472 tons compared with 1905. During the quarter 1,397 foreigners and 182,751 natives were carried as passengers to Hongkong and 1,551 foreigners and 179,969 natives from Hongkong. There were collected from foreign and native sources Hk taels 946,561, as against Hk taels 784,504 in 1905 and Hk taels 820,822 in 1904.

At Kongmoon there were entered under foreign flags 154 ocean going steamers of 44,514 tons and 597 inland waters steamers of 15,658 tons, while under the Chinese flag there were 21 ocean going steamers of 5,995 tons, one steam launch of 16 tons, and 1,917 inland waters steamers of 34,380 tons. This gives a total of 2,690 vessels of 100,563 tons, as against 1,919 vessels of 129,757 tons for the corresponding period of 1905. There were cleared 2,682 vessels of 100,726 tons as against 1,932 vessels of 129,329. The revenue from dues and duties amounted to Hk taels 35,603, which shows an advance as compared with the taels 31,639 in 1905 and the taels 31,215 in 1904.

At Samshui there were entered under foreign flags 150 ocean going steamers of 53,728 tons, 156 river steamers of 39,541 tons, 269 steam launches of 9,834 tons, while under the Chinese flag there were 61 ocean going steamers of 13,278 tons and 554 steam launches of 7,425 tons with tows—a total of 1,190 vessels of 123,805 tons as against 1,224 vessels of 117,826 tons. The numbers cleared, with the figures for the previous quarter were identical with those entered. During the quarter the revenue derived from dues and duties amounted to taels 47,094, an advance on the taels 41,273 for 1905 and the taels 41,250 for 1904.

On the West River stages cotton goods, woollen and cotton mixtures, woollen goods, metals, and foreign and native sundries have been the principal articles of import, while exports consisted of straw, cassia, fireworks, mats, matting, silk, tea timber and tobacco. The revenue obtained from duties collected on goods to and from West River ports during the quarter amounted to taels 18,705 of which the largest proportion was for export duty.

The statistics for Wuchow show that at this port there entered under foreign flags 70 ocean going steamer of 27,106 tons, 110 river steamers of 22,101 tons, one sailing vessel of 330 tons, two steam launches of 52 tons, and 188 inland waters steamers of 3,420 while under the Chinese flag there were 31 ocean going steamers of 6,732 tons and 224 inland waters steamers of 3,063 tons—a total of 626 vessels of 62,794 tons as against 600 vessels of 56,712 tons in 1905. The vessels cleared numbered 629, with a tonnage of 62,857 showing an increase when compared with the 602 vessels of 56,777 tons for the same quarter of 1905. Dues and duties gave to revenue a sum of taels 142,678, as against taels 112,395 in 1905 and taels 135,783 in 1904.

At Kiungchow there entered under foreign flags 136 ocean going steamers of 107,557; no other craft, either under foreign or Chinese flags entered during the quarter. The same number cleared, the only addition being a sailing vessel under the Chinese flag of 123 tons. The total of 137 vessels of 107,975 tons cleared is an advance on the 122 vessels of 91,144 tons in 1905. The revenue drawn from dues and duties amounted to taels 90,301, as against taels 72,575 in 1905 and taels 53,208 in 1904.

At Pakhoi there were 33 ocean going vessels of 21,758 tons entered as compared with 31 of 19,129 tons in 1905, while there cleared 32 ocean going steamers of 20,936 as compared with 32 vessels of 19,752 tons in 1905. All flow foreign flags. The revenue from dues and duties

amounted to tael 34,832 as against tael 34,014 for 1905 and tael 35,029 for 1904.

In Appendix I are the quarterly returns of trade for Kowloon, Lappa and Kiaochow. At Kowloon the number of craft that passed inwards for Taishan, Lintin, and Samchun, Samun and Shaohung and Shatokok numbered 3,936, the tonnage being 313,730, while in addition there were 599 steam launches of 26,457 tons from Hongkong to China. Outwards there passed 4,028 crafts of 303,340 tons in addition to 597 steam launches of 26,545 tons from China to Hongkong. The total collection from dues and likin amounted to tael 105,032, as against tael 100,781 in 1905 and tael 87,477 in 1904.

At Lappa there entered 506 inland waters steamers of 12,026 tons, and 1,734 native craft of 104,135 tons, a total of 2240 vessels of 116,161 tons as against 2544 vessels of 113,186 tons in 1905. There cleared 1,833 vessels of 91,525 tons as against 2,309 vessels of 103,762 tons in 1905. All the shipping was under the Chinese flag. The revenue from duties and likin collected during the quarter was tael 128,587 in 1905 and tael 103,936 in 1904.

At Kiaochow there entered under foreign flags 118 ocean going vessels of 127,308 tons and one sailing vessel of 2,57 tons, while under the Chinese flag there were two ocean going steamers of 130,730 tons compares favourably with the 107 vessels of 112,646 tons in 1905. The same number of vessels cleared as entered, 121, but the tonnage was slightly more, 133,388 tons, as against 109 vessels of 113,86 tons in 1905. The revenue from dues and duties amounted to tael 247,180, as against tael 142,670 in 1905 and tael 128,180 in 1904.

HONGKONG SHIPPING.

The Shipping and Trade Returns of Hongkong for the year 1906 are published in the *Gazette*. Their distinguishing feature is that instead of the usual increases being reported in the totals of ships and tonnage, decreases are shown. During the year under review the number of ships entered and cleared with their respective tonnages were:—

	No. of Registered Ships.	Tonnage.
British Ocean-going	3,627	7,189,171
Foreign Ocean-going	4,287	7,093,195
British River Steamers	6,464	4,812,501
Foreign River Steamers	1,071	667,917
Total	15,519	19,763,84
Steam-ships under 60 tons, Foreign Trade	878	40,282
Junks, Foreign Trade	28,153	2,619,411
Total Foreign Trade	44,550	22,453,77
Steam-Launches, Local Trade	3,333	560,482
Junks, Local Trade	51,616	2,041,655
Total Local Trade	385,176	10,294,191

Grand Total ... 429,726 32,747,968

* Not including Star Ferry launches.

In 1905 the figures were:—

	Ships.	Tonnage.
British Ocean-going	3,995	7,677,224
Foreign Ocean-going	3,816	5,820,785
British River Steamers	7,488	5,554,22
Foreign River Steamers	975	659,597
Ships under 60 tons (Foreign Trade)	1,800	71,448
Junks in Foreign Trade	33,475	2,875,440
Total	51,578	22,653,616
Steam launches plying in the Colony	337,139	9,169,312
Junks in Local Trade	63,267	2,342,163

Grand Total ... 452,758 35,185,091

The comparison shows that the decreases were:

	Ships.	Tonnage.
British Ocean-going	298	482,853
British River-steamers	1,024	711,521
Steam-ships under 60 tons (Foreign trade)	922	31,166
Junks in Foreign trade	5,322	250,029

Steam-launches plying in the Colony ... 4,353 917,776

Junks in Local Trade ... 11,651 319,508

While British ocean-going ships have decreased from 3,995 in 1905 to 3,627 last year, foreign ocean-going ships have in the same time increased from 3,815 to 4,287. British river steamers also show a falling off, from 7,488 to 6,464, and foreign river steamers have advanced from 975 to 1,071. While junks in foreign trade reveal the very large diminution of 5,322, with a corresponding decrease of 256,029 tons those in the local trade report the much greater decrease of 11,651, with a corresponding decline in tonnage of 319,508. Probably the disastrous typhoon of last September accounts in part for these decreases.

Under the heading of imports a net increase of 57,795 tons is shown, though the number of vessels was 369 less. The largest advance is in sugar, which was 170,391 more in 1906 than in 1905. Under the heading of general an increase of 58,712 is noted, and next in order are rice with 58,192, flour 25,127, rattan 9,101, cotton yarn and cotton 8,902, liquid fuel 5,000, and beans 1,247. The biggest decrease is in coal (112,612), the next being kerosene in bulk (45,569), timber (14,082), and hemp (3,428).

Exports showed a net increase during the year of 24,861, despite the 415 less vessels.

The figures for the river trade were:—

Year	Imports	Exports	Passengers
1905	294,425	212,641	2,673,202
1906	284,890	213,071	2,561,272

The number, tonnage, and cargo carried by ships of different nationalities, during the year 1906, are as under:—

Nationality	No. of Registered ships.	Tonnage.	Imports.	Exports.
British	3,697	7,189,171	1,893,231	1,092,812
Austrian	54	201,858	53,760	22,882
Cororan	30	61,596	49,314	100
Chinese	405	501,584	41,390	79,080
Danish	35	81,323	5,734	10,275
Dutch	125	259,130	93,023	49,790
French	435	619,518	10,129	54,275
German	1,682	2,674,189	816,777	309,385
Italian	25	66,578	42,071	11,950
Japanese	593	1,275,640	294,379	182,490
Norwegian	552	571,872	284,622	60,817
Portuguese	148	26,470	5,363	6,497
Russian	25	60,953	150	1,249
Swedish	53	48,611	22,901	6,734
United States	119	613,115	41,430	56,149
No Flag	5	1,052	—	—
Total foreign	4,287	7,093,195	1,831,063	847,432
Total	7,984	14,282,066	3,744,287	1,940,274

Nationality	No. of Registered ships.	Tonnage.	Imports.	Exports.
British	6,464	4,812,501	222,500	173,483
Austrian	—	—	—	—
Cororan	—	—	—	—
Chinese	217	47,513	12,800	19,157
Danish	—	—	—	—
French	541	331,521	20,424	39,837
German	69	45,183	7,710	6,742
Italian	—	—	—	—
Japanese	6	3,714	—	850
Norwegian	—	—	—	—
Portuguese	248	40,176	18,500	—
Russian	—	—	—	—
Swedish	—	—	—	—
United States	—	—	—	—
No Flag	—	—	—	—
Total foreign	1,071	667,917	62,834	49,587
Total	7,535	5,510,418	284,800	223,070

Nationality	No. of Registered ships.	Tonnage.	Imports.	Exports.
British	10,191	12,031,972	2,113,490	1,166,320
Austrian	54	201,858	53,760	22,882
Cororan	30	61,596	49,314	100
Chinese	622	548,807	51,190	88,137
Danish	35	81,323	5,734	10,275
Dutch	125	259,130	93,023	49,790
French	936	1,181,049	123,453	85,112
German	1,751	2,719,372	824,487	314,138
Italian	25	66,578	42,071	11,950
Japanese	600	1,279,354	294,379	183,259
Norwegian	552	571,872	284,622	60,817
Portuguese	396	66,646	23,863	6,497

Russian	25	60,593	150	1,219
Swedish	53	48,611	22,911	6,704
United States	119	613,115	41,430	56,149
No Flag	5	1,052	—	—

Total Flag 5,358 7,761,412 1,913,687 897,616

Total ... 12,519 19,793,384 4,029,177 2,163,344

CORRESPONDENCE.

PARSEE TRUSTEES PLEASE NOTE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "DAILY PRESS."

Hongkong, 2nd March.

SIR,—The suggestion made in this morning's issue of the *Daily Press* by "Bajna" to convene a meeting of the Parsee community of Hongkong at their club house to pass a resolution expressing their thanks and deep sense of gratitude to His Majesty the Shah of Persia for the reassuring message he has sent through His Britannic Majesty's Minister at Teheran is worthy of immediate action on the part of the Trustees of the Charity Fund, who may well be called the legally constituted and elected representatives of the Parsee Community of Hongkong and Macao. It is indeed a matter of surprise to many that no steps have as yet been taken by the Trustees in this matter, as apart from the gratitude felt by the community, that their less fortunate coreligionists living under the sway of His Majesty the Shah of Persia are so well looked after and protected, the cannons of courtesy demand that a suitable reply be sent to His Majesty.

Perhaps it will not be amiss to suggest here that the time has now arrived when the Trustees should take their community into their confidence and put before them the steps they have taken to safeguard their interest in the claim they have on the Shanghai Parsee Community Charity Fund. All sorts of wild rumours are afloat amongst the members of the community, mostly to the effect that the matter is not to be fought out to the bitter end on strength of the correspondence and documents held by them and clearly establishing their claim, but that it will be left to the discretion of the court to decide and determine what rights and claims the Hongkong community have on the accumulated funds at Shanghai. The considerations of the cost of the legal proceedings are rightly or wrongly held out as a convenient shield of defence of this novel step, but of course in the absence of all information, withheld by the Trustees, it is impossible to judge as to the correctness or otherwise of all such vague rumours and talks circulating amongst the individual members. It is, therefore, meet that some information be given out at the same meeting, and the true feeling of the community gauged, and their wishes ascertained before it is too late to decide as to the adoption of the final step in connection with the proceedings in the case that is shortly coming before the Supreme Court at Shanghai.—I am, Sir, Yours faithfully

A ZOROASTRIAN.

THE PARSES IN PERSIA.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "DAILY PRESS."

SIR,—The gratitude of your recent Parsee correspondents to the new Shah is very nice, but it may be as well to recall the history of the Shah's telegram.

A Parsee firm of the Colony recently received telegraphic advice from their Bombay Agency that their merchant-representative in Persia had been murdered at Yazdesed, during the troubles incidental to the respective claims of the new Shah and of a nephew of the late Shah, to the Persian throne. The new Shah's telegram was in reply to enquiries about that regrettable incident. I don't think it is quite necessary for the Parses to cable their thanks under the circumstances.

Yours faithfully
LOYALTY.

COMMERCIAL.

The Yokohama Prices Current and Market Report, published by the Yokohama Foreign Board of Trade and dated Yokohama, February 15th 1907 has the following:—

IMPORTS.

Yarns.—No business, owing to old style New Year holidays in the interior. Shirtings.—Buyers are not open for business, except for cheap lots. Fancy Cottons and Woollens.—Market in Whites, Lawns, and Mousselines is weak. Woollens do not find good demand. Metals.—The Tokyo market is very quiet indeed. In the country New Year according to the old calendar is being celebrated, which means that the movement of goods is at a standstill, while dealers are holding off forward contracts in anticipation of a change in the situation of the home markets. Kerosene.—Market steady. Sugar. In view of the question of Refund of import duty on Raw Sugar, the market has slightly improved, and some demand is expected to spring up, though, so far, no transactions have taken place in Refined Sugar. The auction of the Tokyo Refinery on the 4th instant resulted in no business owing to the Refinery's indifferent attitude towards the bids which were made. Indigo (Natural).—No business doing, stocks of all qualities extremely small.

GENERAL EXPORTS.

Fish Oil.—Some forward business has been done since last Report, at gradually rising prices, and the market closes very firm at Yen 7.70 to 7.80 per 100 kin for ordinary quality. Copper.—No transactions to report owing to a strike of miners, which has broken out at the Ashio Mine last week. Deliveries of Copper from that mine will be delayed to some extent. Particulars cannot yet be given, though the strike seems to be finished.

SILK REPORT.

Our last report was dated the 1st inst., since when the absence of legitimate demand has continued, whilst gambling on the local Exchange still absorbs the interest of all native dealers, who under these conditions pay very slight attention to orders coming from abroad. Under such circumstances quotations remain naturally more or less nominal for the remaining stock of filatures full sizes. Stocks of fine-sized filatures, re-reels, and Kakedas are now quite exhausted.

WASTE SILK.

A steady business doing at unchanged prices. Stock offers very little choice to buyers. Settlements from Feb. 1st to Feb. 7th 2,500 piculs. Total Settlements from July 1st to Feb. 7th: 43,800 piculs. Stock on the 8th Feb. is estimated at 10,000 piculs, viz.: Noshi, 2,800 piculs; Kibizzo, 6,000 piculs; Pierced Cocoons, piculs; Sundries, 1,200 piculs.

SILK.

CANTON, 23rd February, 1907.—Silk Market.—We did not issue any circular on the 9th inst., because the Chinese New Year fell on the 13th inst., and business was suspended; consequently it was impossible to give accurate quotations. The condition remains the same to-day, the market having just reopened. On the approach of the Chinese New Year a generally lower range of prices was aimed at by the buyers; but, owing to the lightness of stock and the good profits made by reelers, there was little pressure to sell; therefore bargains in raw and waste were not so numerous as usual at this period. The silk market reopened with an active enquiry for Long Reels and Short Reels, and prices show a strong upward tendency, whilst the waste market remains practically unchanged and rather dull in the absence of any demand. Stock of Silk in Canton 1,500 bales.

COAL.

Messrs. Hughes and Hough, in their Coal Report of 7th March, state that 12 steamers are expected at Hongkong with a total of 49,400 tons of coal. Since February 23rd, 13 steamers have arrived with a total of 46,360 tons of coal.

It also states that a small business is doing in Japanese; holders are asking slightly higher prices owing to the rise and scarcity of tonnage. Quotations:—

Cardiff.....\$14.00 to 15.00 ex-ship, nominal.
Australian.....\$10.00 to \$11.00 ex-ship, nominal.
Yubari Lump.....\$12.00 nominal.
Miki Lump.....\$10.00 nominal.
Moji Lump.....\$6.00 to \$8.00 ex-ship, steady.
Moji Unscreened \$8.00 to \$7.00 ex-ship, steady.
Akaiki Lump.....\$7.75 to \$8.50 steady.
Bengal.....\$9.00 to \$9.50 nominal.

RAW COTTON.

HONGKONG, 8th March.—Good business done at a rise of \$1 per picul. Stock about 900 bales. Bombay.....\$17.50 to \$20.50 per picul.
Bengal (New), Rangoon
and Dacca.....20.50 to 22.50 ..
Shanghai and Japanese 25.00 to 26.00 ..
Tungchow and Ningpo.....25.00 to 26.00 ..
Reported sales, 650 bales.

YARN.

Mr. P. Eduljee in his report, dated Hongkong, 8th March, states:—Business continues in the same dull dragging state as previously mentioned. No sign whatever of the long expected improvement in demand is apparent and there is an absence of the usual bustle and activity amongst the handful of dealers and operators left on our market. Twelves and Sixteens are practically neglected. Twenties move very slowly, the bulk of the small business done during the fortnight being in Tens. Values have further receded 50 cents to a dollar and a half per bale, No. 10s suffering the least. Receipts continue to fall away and with larger off-takes our estimate of stocks shows a considerable decrease on last figures. The market again closes quiet with a tendency to lower prices.

Sales of the interval aggregate 3,988 bales, arrivals amount to 1,908 bales, unsold stock estimated at 90,000, and uncleared yarn in second hands 22,000 bales.

Local Manufacture.—After a long interval there appears to be some movement in these threads, and sales of 570 bales Nos. 10s and 12s at \$83 and \$85 respectively have transpired. The Mill is now working full time.

Japanese Yarn.—Has been fairly active, and 125 bales No. 16s at \$122 and 480 bales No. 20s at from \$126 to \$136 are reported to have changed hands during the interval.

Raw Cotton.—There is little or no demand for old Indian descriptions, but new Bengals are in fair request, and 400 bales new Superfine Bengals at \$20 1/2 to \$21, and 55 bales old at \$19, have found buyers. Nothing doing in China cotton.

Exchange on India has fluctuated slightly and closes to-day at Rs. 163 1/2 for T.T. and Rs. 164 for Post. On Shanghai 72 1/2 and on Yek-hama 108.

The undermentioned business in imported and local spinning is reported from Shanghai during the fortnight ended the 2nd instant, viz:—

Indian.—Business has been on a restricted scale, total settlements amounting to about 4,500 bales with a decline of half to one Tael in prices. Total estimated stock of unsold and uncleared yarn 15,000.

Japanese.—Total settlements about 1,200 bales on the basis of Tls. 85 to 95 for No. 16s and Tls. 99 to 100 for No. 20s, prices showing a decline of half to one Tael.

Local.—No fresh business from first hand.

MISCELLANEOUS IMPORTS.

HONGKONG, 8th March.—The prices ruling are as follows:

COTTON YARN.—Owing to pressed sales prices have further receded about \$1 1/2 per bale for all counts, resulting in a small business. Quotations are: No. 10s at \$71 to \$91, No. 16s at \$96 to \$121, and No. 20s at \$97 to \$140. Arrivals 5,000 bales. Sales 4,000 bales; Shipments 4,000 bales; Bargains 54,000 bales. Unsold stock 63,000 bales.

Bombay Nos. 16 to 20.....\$8.00 to \$12.00
English Nos. 16 to 24.....14.00 to 14.50
" 22 to 24.....14.00 to 15.00
" 28 to 32.....15.00 to 16.00
" 36 to 42.....16.50 to 17.00

CORROSIVE GOODS.—Market flat. Nothing doing.

Grey Shirtings 7 lbs.....\$2.40 to \$2.50
" 8 lbs.....3.00 to 3.7
" 9 to 10 lbs.....4.00 to 4.80
White Shirtings 54 to 56 rd 2.70 to 2.90
" 58 to 60.....3.00 to 3.20
" 61 to 66.....3.25 to 3.40
Fine.....3.50 to 7.00
Black-rolls.....3.00 to 7.75
Victoria Lawns 12 yards.....0.60 to 1.50
T-cloths 6 lbs 32 in (Ord.) 2.00 to 2.20
" 7 lbs 32.....2.25 to 2.75
" 6 lbs 32 in (Max.) 2.20 to 2.45
" 7 lbs 32.....2.40 to 3.05
" 8 to 8 1/2 oz., 36 in 3.00 to 3.70

Drills, English 40 yds. 13 1/2 to 14 lbs.....4.70 to 7.25
FANCY COTTON.—Small sales. Market dull.

Turkey Red Shirtings—(4 to 5 lbs.) \$1.80 to \$3.65

MISCELLANEOUS EXPORTS.

HANKOW, 27th Feb., 1907.—The prices quoted are for the net shipping weight excluding cost of packing for export:—

Cowhides, Best Selected.....Tls. 38.00
Do. Seconds....." 34.00
Buffalo Hides, Best Selected....." 22.50
Goatskins, untanned, chiefly white colour....." 69.50
Buffalo Horns, average 3-lbs. each....." 7.50
White China Grass, Wuchang and or Poochi....." 11.00
White China Grass, Sinshan and or Chayu....." 10.00
Green China Grass, Szechuen....." 13.00
Jute....." 5.70
White Vegetable Tallow, Kinchow....." 10.50
White Vegetable Tallow, Pingchow and or Macheng....." 10.30
White Vegetable Tallow, Mongyu....." 10.00
Green Vegetable Tallow, Kiyu....." 14.00
Animal Tallow....." 10.50
Gallnuts, usual shape....." 15.40
Gallnuts, plum do....." 17.00
Tobacco, Tungchow....." 8.00
Tobacco, Wankong....." 9.00
Turmeric....." 5.50
Sesamum Seed....." 5.60
Sesamum Seed Oil....." 11.00
Wood Oil....." 8.80
Tea Oil....." 11.00

Per steamer *Machao*, sailed on 26th February. For Havre, London or Hamburg:—10 cases cassia oil. For Marseilles:—200 cases cassia. For Havre or Antwerp: 50 cases bristles. For London opt. Cent: 50 cases camphor, 200 bales cassia, 200 cases cassia, 100 cases cassia buds, 100 bales duck feathers. For London:—26 cases effects and sundries, 130 bales feathers. For London or Glasgow:—150 cases ginger, 500 cases ginger. For New York:—50 cases ginger.

AMOY CUSTOMS RETURNS.

The Amoy Gazette and Shipping Report, dated 2nd March, 1907, has the following list of the principal goods passed through the Amoy Customs house:

IMPORTS.

Goods.	QUANTITY
Cotton Raw, Indian.....	pls. —
" " Native.....	—
" " Yarn.....	1,008
Shirtings, Grey.....	840
T-cloths.....	2,075
Shirtings, White.....	511
T. Red Shirtings.....	270
Drills.....	—
Shirtings Dyed, Broades.....	86
" Dyed.....	19
Damasks.....	—
Camlets.....	115
Lasting.....	2
Spanish Stripes.....	356
Lustres, Figured.....	—
Lead in pigs.....	26
Tin in slabs.....	101
Iron, Nail rod.....	42
Quicksilver.....	17
Iron, Old.....	—
Ironwire.....	12
Rice.....	2,926
Opium, Patna.....	—
" Benares.....	60
" Persian.....	22
" Malwa.....	—
" Szechuen.....	—
" Yunnan.....	—
" Kiangsu.....	—
Sesamum Seed.....	—
Sapwood.....	—
Sandalwood.....	—
Rattans.....	—
Wheat.....	49
Flour.....	3,694
Beans and Peas.....	1,184
Richie de Mer.....	8
Mats, Tow.....	—

GOODS.

Goods.	QUANTITY
Oil, Kerosene American.....	gal. 397,080
" " Borneo in bulk.....	" 49,045
Coal.....	tons 1,406
Tobacco Leaf.....	pls. 130
Vermorelli.....	" 700

EXPORTS.

Goods.	QUANTITY
Sugar, White.....	pls. —
" Brown.....	" —
" Candy.....	" —
Hemp Bags.....	pcs. 3,100
" Sacking.....	" 4,200
Paper 1 Quality.....	pls. 424
" II.....	" 6
Tobacco, Prepared.....	" 25
Kittysols (umbrellas).....	pcs. —

HONGKONG QUOTATIONS.

HONGKONG, 8th March, 1907.		
Apricot	\$9	to 10.50
Borax	\$16	.. 17
Cassia	\$14	.. 20
Cloves	\$20	.. 37
Camphor	\$155	.. \$160
Cow Bezoar	\$115	.. \$140
Fennel Seed	\$8	.. --
Galangal	\$12	.. \$5
Grapes	\$15	.. --
Kismis	\$15	.. --
Glue	\$27	.. --
Olibanum	\$4	.. \$17
Oil Sandalwood	\$180	.. \$350
.. Rosa	\$70	.. \$150
Raisins	\$7	.. \$8
Senna Leaves	\$3	.. \$7
Sandalwood	\$24	.. \$26
Saltpeter	\$9	.. \$10

SHARE REPORTS.

HONGKONG, 8th March, 1907. A small investment business continues to be the chief feature of the market, and a fair general business has been transacted at rates slightly lower, in most cases, than those reported last week. We have no great changes to report in rates, with the exception of Shell Transports, which, with a demand from London, and a very limited supply in the East, have further improved to 42½. Exchange on London: T T 2 2 7 16. On Shanghai 72 7 8.

BANKS.—Hongkong and Shanghai changed hands in the earlier part of the week in fair lots at \$895, and later some small sales were made at \$890; the market closes with sellers at the higher, and with probable buyers at the lower rate. Nationals remain unchanged and without business.

MARINE INSURANCES.—Unions continue in demand but no sellers come forward, and the market closes strong at \$830 to \$835. Cantons have found further buyers at \$295, but close with sellers at that rate. North Chinas are in request at \$80, but none appear to be available. Yangtzes unchanged and without any local business.

FIRE INSURANCES. The market has ruled weak with Hongkong offering at \$385 and Chinas at \$399, and later at 98. Some small sales of Hongkong have been made at \$385, and \$382½ cum dividend of \$40 paid to day, and Chinas have been placed at \$398. Both stocks close with sellers, the former at \$312½ ex div. and the latter at 90 ex div and bonus of \$8 paid to day.

SHIPPING.—Hongkong, Canton and Macao have ruled rather weaker, and after small sales at \$30, close with a sale at \$29½, but with further buyers at the latter rate. Indos have declined to \$83 without business. Shanghai quotes Tls. 60. Small sales of Star Ferrys are reported at \$30 (old). Shells have improved, with a demand from London, to 42½ after comparatively small sales at 41½ and 41½, the market closing steady. We have nothing else to report under this heading.

REFINERIES.—China Sugars continue neglected with sellers at \$122. It is reported that a dividend of \$8 per share will shortly be paid, but the report is not yet issued. Luzons remain unchanged and without business.

MINING.—Raubs have been placed during the week at \$8.15, and close at \$8½ with probable buyers. Charbonnages neglected and without business.

LANDS, HOTELS AND BUILDINGS. Hongkong Lands have found buyers at \$107 and close firm at that rate. Kowloon Lands are wanted at quotation, but we have heard of no sales. West Points have been placed at \$50, and close steady at that. Humphrey's have been the medium of a fair business at \$114.

DOCKS, WHARVES AND GODOWNS. Hongkong and Whampoa Docks have further declined to \$133, with sellers after small sales at \$134. Kowloon Wharves have been negotiated at the reduced rate of \$93, and Shanghai Docks at Tls. 107. Shanghai and Hongkong Wharves have been sold to Shanghai at various rates for March, April, May and June, the market closing quiet at a lower rate of \$24 for cash, cum new issue, with sellers in Shanghai Tls. 231 ex new issue, and Tls. 221 for the new issue. New Amoy Docks unchanged and without business.

COTTON MILLS.—Internationals have declined to Tls. 101, and Laou Kung Mows to Tls. 112. Soy Chees are quoted at Tls. 370 ex dividend of 10 per cent. paid on the 6th March. Other Cottons remain unchanged and without business.

MISCELLANEOUS.—China Provident's continue in demand and are now enquired for at \$8.90 without bringing any shares on the market. Fenwicks are weaker with sellers at \$20. Green Islands have found buyers at \$20½ and \$20 ex dividend of \$1½ paid on 3rd instant. Electric at \$15.9½. Kops at \$21. Steam Landries at \$5½ and Watkins at \$4½. We have nothing further to report.

Quotations are as follows:

COMPANY	PAID UP	QUOTATIONS
Alhambra	\$200	\$120
Banks—		
Hongkong & Shanghai	\$125	\$895, sellers
National B. of China		London, £104, x d
A. Shares	£6	\$51
Bell's A. Santos E. A.	12½	61, \$7, sellers
China-Borneo Co.	\$12	\$10, sellers
China Light & P. Co.	\$10	\$9½, sellers
China Provident	\$10	\$8.90, buyers
Cotton Mills—		
Ewo	Tls. 50	Tls. 75
Hongkong	\$10	\$12
International	Tls. 75	Tls. 67
Laou Kung Mow	Tls. 100	Tls. 112, x d
Soy Chees	Tls. 300	Tls. 370, x d
Dairy Farm	\$5	\$16½, sellers
Docks & Wharves—		
H. & K. Wharf & G.	\$50	\$83, sales & sel
H. & W. Dock	\$50	\$133, sellers
New Amoy Dock	\$61	\$12½
Shanghai Dock and I.	Tls. 10	Tls. 107
Eng. Co. Ltd.		
Shui & H. Wharf	100	Tls. 231
Fenwick & Co. Gas	\$20	\$20, sellers
G. Island Cement	\$10	\$20, x d sellers
Hongkong & C. Gas	\$10	\$175, buyers
Hongkong Electric	\$10	\$15.90, sales & buy
H. H. L. Tramways	\$50	\$215
Hongkong Hotel Co.	\$50	\$118, x d sellers
Hongkong Ice Co.	\$25	\$240, buyers
Hongkong Refriger.	\$10	\$21, sales
H. K. S. Waterworks	\$50	\$6½, sellers
Insurance—		
Canton	\$50	\$295, sales & buy
China Fire	\$20	\$90, x d sellers
China Traders	\$25	\$90
Hongkong Fire	\$50	\$312½, x d sellers
North China	\$5	Tls. 80, buyers
Union	\$50	\$80, buyers
Yangtze	\$50	\$157½
Land and Buildings—		
H. K. Land Invest.	\$100	\$107, sales & buy
Humphrey's Estate	\$10	\$11 25, sellers
Kowloon Land & B.	\$30	\$37½, buyers
Shanghai Land	Tls. 25	Tls. 100
West Point Building	\$50	\$50, sel
Mining—		
Charbonnages	Fr. 250	\$150, nominal
Raubs	18 10	\$8.25
Philippine Co.	\$10	\$5
Refineries—		
China Sugar	\$100	\$122, sellers
Luzon Sugar	\$100	\$21, sellers
Steamship Companies—		
China and Manila	\$25	\$20, sellers
Ponglis Steamship	\$50	\$30, sellers
H. Canton & M.	\$15	\$20½, buyers
Indo-China S. N. Co.	\$10	\$83, sellers
Shell Transport Co.	\$1	\$1 6, buyers
Star Ferry	\$10	\$9½, sales
De New	\$5	\$21, sellers
South China M. Post	\$25	\$25
Steam Laundry Co.	\$5	\$2½, sales & buy
Stores & Dispensaries—		
Campbell, M. & Co.	\$10	\$30, sellers
Powell & Co. Wm.	\$10	\$7½, buyers
Watkins	\$10	\$2.50, sales & buy
Watson & Co. A. S.	\$10	\$12 10, buyers
United Asbestos	\$1	\$10, buyers
Do. Founders	\$10	\$150

VERNON & SMYTH Brokers.

Messrs. J. P. Bisset & Co.'s Share Report for the week ending February 28, 1907, states:—Business generally has been dull, as the Chinese New Year holidays can hardly yet be called over. A fair business has been done in Wharf Shares, speculation being rife over the question of the coming dividend which should be known early next month. The T. T. sight rate on London today is 3 0½. Banks.—Hongkong and Shanghai Bank. Local business at \$895 but higher rates are asked. Hongkong quotes \$900. Marine and Fire Insurance.—No business reported with the exception of a transaction in Unions from Hongkong at \$850. Shipping.—Business has been done in Indos at Tls. 61, Tls. 61½, and Tls. 62, for March. There are sellers at the latter rate, and for June at Tls. 63. Shanghai Tugs have been placed at Tls. 50, and Tls. 51 for ordinary shares. Docks and Wharves.—Shanghai Dock and Engineering Co., Ltd. Shares have ruled very quiet during the week, there being only one official quotation, this at Tls. 107. A small lot was offering at this rate. Shanghai and Hongkong Wharves. The market opened on the 21st with sellers for May at Tls. 252½, and on the 25th at Tls. 236 for old shares ex new issue, and Tls. 247½ for March cum div. On the 27th shares were placed at Tls. 252½ for May and today at Tls. 248½ March. The market is steady at the latter rate. Sugar.—No business reported. Mining.—No business reported. Lands. Shanghai Lands. Business is reported at Tls. 107 for March, and Tls. 104 for the new issue. Anglo-French Lands at Tls. 100½. Industrial.—Business is reported on Internationals at Tls. 65 and Tls. 68½ March, at which rate there are buyers. Also in Ewo at Tls. 75 March. Laou Kung Mows have been placed at Tls. 120, and there are sellers at this rate. Shanghai Gas, new issue, have been placed at Tls. 111. Shanghai Paper and Pulp have been placed at Tls. 118. Mats, Lappet, etc., in Langkats. Business is reported at Tls. 201 for cash and Tls. 205 March. The market is steady. Sumatra have been placed at Tls. 100 and Tls. 100½. Miscellaneous. Astor House Hotel Shares have been placed at \$30 at which rate there are sellers. Telephones at Tls. 60. Horse Bazaars at Tls. 40. Loans and Debentures.—Shanghai Waterworks 6 per cent. debenture at Tls. 98 and Tls. 98½. Astor House debenture at Tls. 105.

EXCHANGE

ON LONDON — FRIDAY, Mar. 8th.	
Telegraphic Transfer	2 2 7
Bank Bills on demand	2 2 7
Bank Bills at 30 days' sight	2 2 7
Bank Bills at 60 days' sight	2 2 7
Bank Bills at 90 days' sight	2 2 7
Credits at 4 months' sight	2 3
Documentary Bills 4 months' sight	2 3 4
ON PARIS —	
Bank Bills on demand	279
Credits 4 months' sight	283
ON GERMANY —	
On demand	226
ON NEW YORK —	
Bank Bills on demand	53
Credits 60 days' sight	74
ON BOMBAY —	
Telegraphic Transfer	163
Bank on demand	164
ON CALCUTTA —	
Telegraphic Transfer	163
Bank on demand	164
ON SHANGHAI —	
Bank at sight	72
Private 30 days' sight	73
ON YOKOHAMA —	
On 30 days	108
ON MANILA —	
On demand	108
ON SINGAPORE —	
On demand	8½ p.m.
ON BATAVIA —	
On demand	132
ON HAIPHONG —	
On demand	2 p.m.
ON SAIGON —	
On demand	2 p.m.
ON BANGKOK —	
On demand	67
SOVEREIGNS, Bank's Buying Rate	\$9.05
GOLD LEAF, 100 fine, per tael	\$47.80
BAR SILVER, per oz.	31½

FREIGHT.

From Hankow per Conference Steamers.—To London and Northern Continental ports 46/- per ton of 40 c. ft. plus river freight. To Genoa, Marseilles, or Havre 46/- per ton of 40 c. ft. plus river freight. To New York (via Suez) General Cargo 32/- per ton of 40 c. ft. plus river freight. To New York (via Suez)—Tea 30 6 per ton of 40 c. ft. plus river freight. To New York (overland)—Tea 31 4 cents per lb. gross, plus river freight. To Shanghai—Tea and General Cargo, Tls. 1.60 to \$1.80 per ton weight or measurement.

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